

Stories of Bible Victories

FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

EMMA A. ROBINSON

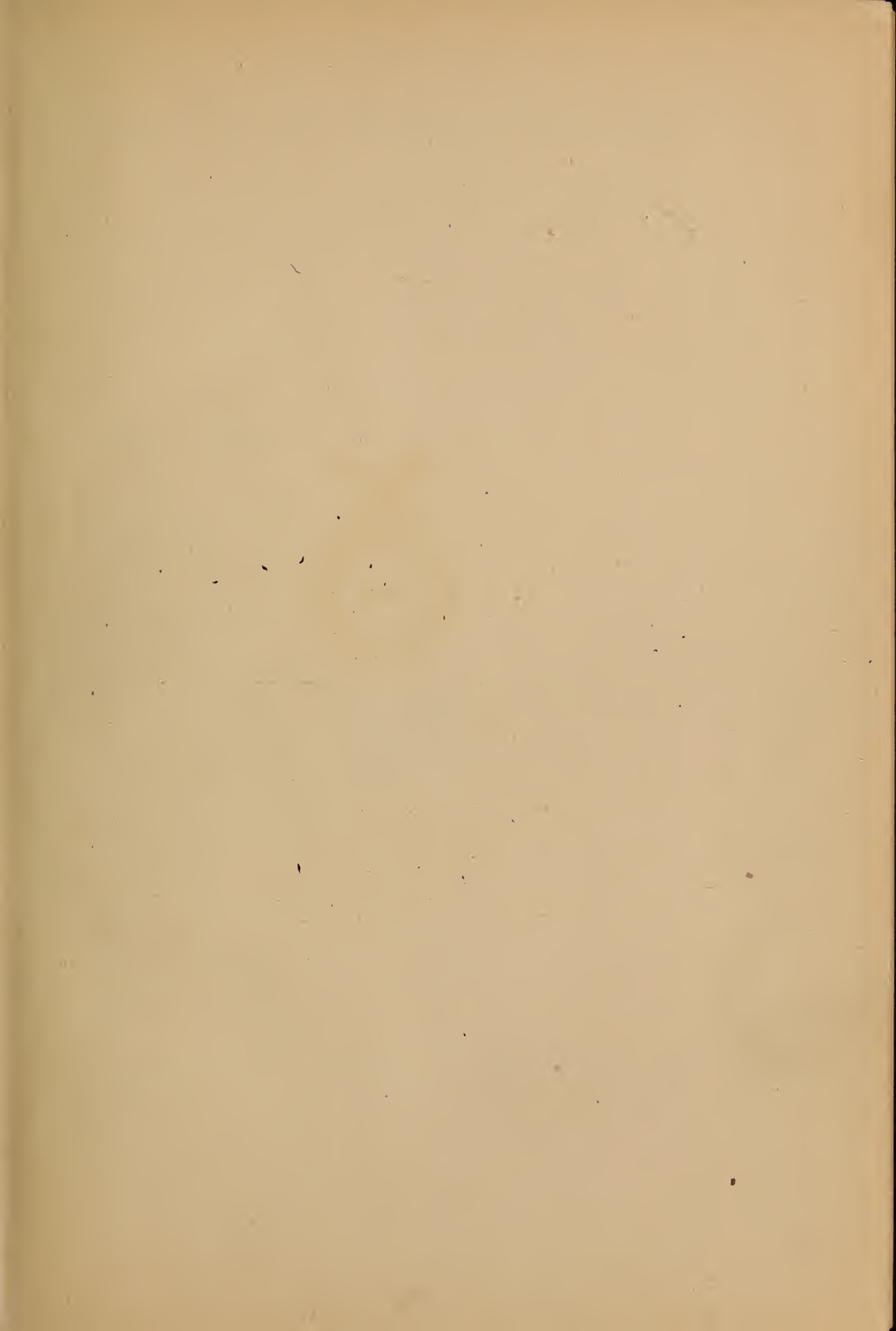


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Stories of Bible Victories

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By

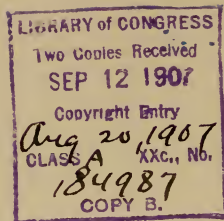
EMMA A. ROBINSON



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"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you
like men, be strong."—I COR. XVI, 13.

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FOREWORD

Boys and girls of ten and twelve years of age are hero-worshippers. They glory in strength and power, and bow in adoration before the man who wins. War stories have the greatest charm for them, and where shall they find a book of more thrilling war stories than the Old Testament?

The history of God's chosen people is verily written in war stories, and the great steps in their national progress are read in the word Victory. But, as in almost every case, the real victories are not the ones achieved on the battle-field, but those won in the hearts and lives of leader and people; so in these stories, the aim has been to so portray the picture that the moral victory shall leave its impress on the life, and the battle-field be simply the medium for the implanting of the great truth.

In the teaching of these stories, the real work for the Juniors will come in connection with the map studies suggested for each lesson. This work may be made exceedingly interesting, if the leader will thoroughly inform herself in regard to the

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geography of the country. To do this will require time and study, but the result will far more than pay for the time expended.

To know the hills and the mountains, the rivers, valleys, and lakes; the trees, the flowers, and the birds, will give to one a teaching power that can not be measured, and will make the stories of this book of untold interest to the boys and girls.

The victory stories should be given simply as stories, and then the map study taken up, beginning with Map I, which gives the general arrangement of the Old Testament countries in their relationship to each other.

Let each Junior make a set of maps, working upon them from week to week till they are completed, and locating places, first on the map, and then on the relief map.

To make this map work full of vital interest, the boys and girls must be able to see, through the eyes of the teacher, the barren shelving rocks, the gorges and ravines, the oases about the wells, the fertile valleys, rugged mountains, and desert wastes.

In making the maps, let each Junior be provided with a map board about eight by twelve inches, if possible. To this the paper for the maps may be fastened with thumb tacks.

The pencils for map making should be the soft medium, and the journeys be traced with either red or blue pencils. In the map outlines,

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the places to be located in advanced lessons are indicated by a cross, and the initial letter, and should not be put in till they are mentioned in the story.

The outlines to be completed later are indicated by dotted lines; also the journeys.

Directions for making the relief map are given in chapter seven.

The references given have been confined to one set of books, and Geikie's Old Testament Hours has been selected as covering a broader field, and one more particularly adapted to furnish just the material needed, than any other one author.

Every pastor's library should furnish the Junior Superintendent with a reference library, where she can not have one of her own.

Rand-McNally's Biblical Atlas, price \$1.50, is invaluable to all Bible students.

George Adam Smith's Historical Geography of the Holy Land, price \$4.50, is one of the best books for making the Holy Land a living reality.

A Bible dictionary is indispensable to Junior workers, either Davis, price \$2.00 net, \$2.25 postpaid, or Smith-Peloubet, price \$1.50 net, \$1.70 postpaid, is very satisfactory.

Geikie's Old Testament Hours, price, six volumes, \$6.00 net.

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CHAPTER I.

A TRIUMPH OF OBEDIENCE.

A LONG, long time ago, a great many years before even Moses could remember, God looked down on this earth which He had made. He saw something that made Him very sad. The grass and trees were just as green, and the flowers just as beautiful, as on the very first day. The birds sang as sweetly as ever, and all the living things that God had created were as they were at first, except the most important of all. As He looked at the people, He saw that they had become very, *very* wicked; so wicked that He was sorry that He had made them.

In all this world, God found just one family who loved Him and tried to do what was right.

He knew that some day, when Noah and his family went to heaven, there would not be a single righteous man left unless something was done. The people would not listen to Noah, or stop their wrong-doing, so God said He would

Stories of Bible Victories

have to put new people on the earth, people who would love Him.

He did not forget Noah, but told him to make an ark or house-boat, five hundred and twenty-five feet long, eighty-seven and a half feet wide, and fifty-two and a half feet high, because He was going to send a flood upon the earth, and every one would be destroyed, except those who were in the ark.

Noah began work at once. It took a long time to cut the trees, and get them ready to make the ark. People wondered what in the world Noah was going to do with all that lumber. When he told them he was going to make an ark, they thought it was a huge joke and just laughed at him.

By and by he was ready to build the ark. Then people thought that he really was crazy. First one and then another came to watch him.

"What are you making, Noah?" some one would ask.

"An ark," Noah replied.

"Are you going to sail it in the grass, or on the mountains?"

"Will you bring water in a pail to sail in?" others would say.

Then some good friend: "See here, Noah, this is a great waste of time; you know there is not a stream or lake anywhere near, and if there was, how would you get that great boat to it?"

The Triumph of Obedience

It won't be a bit of use to you. And then, Noah, don't you know people are beginning to think you are queer?"

Then Noah told them about the flood, and begged them to stop being wicked so they might go into the ark, but they only laughed at him, and said: "Why, Noah, you must be crazy. Think how it rained two years ago, and there was not enough water fell to float even a row boat. Why, it couldn't rain enough water for such an ark as that to float, and if it did we would go up on the mountains, and be all right. Come, Noah, do not be so foolish. You ought to be taking care of your flocks and looking after your family."

But day after day Noah worked away. God had said, "Build an ark," and had told him just how, and it made no difference how much people laughed at him, he was going to do it.

It was a great undertaking for one man, but that could not down him either; so the work went on, until at last the ark was finished.

His friends watched it grow, and gathered round when all was completed.

"Pretty good piece of work," said one.

"Yes, but what a waste of time!" said another.

"When are you going to launch it, Noah?" said the third.

Noah had given up trying to make them be-

Stories of Bible Victories

lieve that God told him to build the ark. He had won the day, and the ark was finished in spite of the hard work, and in the face of their ridicule.

Then, too, Noah was very busy now. God had told him to take into the ark two of every kind of animals, birds, insects, and of everything that was alive. When this was finished, God told Noah to take his wife, his two sons and their wives, and go into the ark, and then God closed the door and shut them in. That very day it began to rain; day after day the rain poured down. People left their homes and went up on the hillside, then to the tops of the mountains; but the water rose higher and higher, till the tops of the mountains were covered, and not a single living thing was left on the earth.

Forty days it rained, and it was seven months before the water went down so that the ark rested on the top of the mountain. All this time the man who had had the courage to "win out," even though God's command did seem so strange, was safe.

Three months later the tops of the mountains appeared above the water. Noah waited forty days longer, then he thought the water must surely be dried up, so he opened a window in the ark and sent out a dove. But she found no tree in which to rest, and came back again. A week later he sent her out again, and this time she brought a leaf back in her bill. How glad they

The Triumph of Obedience

were to see a green leaf once more. They all crowded round, and each one wanted to feel of it, and to smell it.

"Now we can go out," said one.

"Won't it be fine to be on the land once more?" said some one else. "Let us go right away."

But Noah said, "No, we must wait a little longer."

The next week the dove was sent out again. All day they watched for her to come back, but night came and she did not come. The next morning she did not come either, and then Noah knew that the water was gone; but still they had to wait till the ground was dry.

It seemed such a long time, but at last God told them to go out of the ark.

How the birds did sing as they flew out into the trees, and the cattle ran and frisked in the green grass! Noah and his family were just as happy as the birds and animals, but instead of running or singing, they showed their happiness by building an altar and worshiping God.

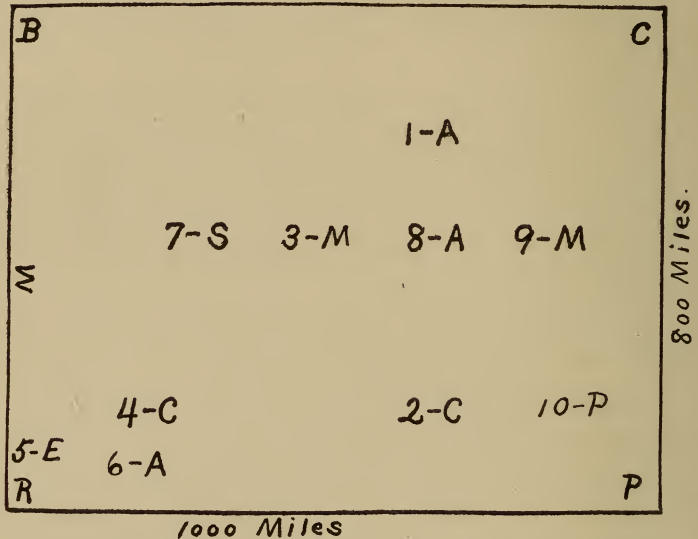
Then God said in His heart, "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake. While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

"And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth.

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“And I will establish My covenant with you and with your children after you. There shall not any more be a flood to destroy the earth, and this is the token of the covenant which I make between Me and you:

*MAP I.



“I will set a rainbow in the clouds, and it shall be for the token of the covenant between Me and the earth.

“And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud. And I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you, and every living creature, and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.”

* By consent of Dr. H. M. Hamill.

The Triumph of Obedience

MAP STUDY.

KEY TO MAP.—At the four corners the Red, Black, and Caspian Seas, and the Persian Gulf; at the left side the Mediterranean Sea.

1. Armenia, where the ark rested on Mt. Ararat.

2. Chaldea, the birthplace of Abraham.

3. Mesopotamia, Abraham's next home.

4. Canaan, the land of promise.

5. Egypt, the land of bondage.

6. Arabia, the wilderness.

7. Syria, Israel's enemy.

8. Assyria, Israel's enemy.

9-10. Media and Persia, the liberators of the Jews.

Make the plan and fix the location of Mt. Ararat for the first lesson.

REFERENCE.—Bible Story, Genesis, chapters 6 to 9: 18.

CHAPTER II.

A PRAYER VICTORY.

THE tents of Abraham were scattered over the hills and valleys all about Hebron. Here and there, as far as one could see, were the flocks of sheep, each watched over and guarded by its own shepherd.

The day was warm, and Abraham, instead of going into the tent where he and Sarah lived, sat in the door.

As he looked off over the plains he saw three men, apparently travelers, coming toward him. He did not know who they were, but, like all people in that country, he was very courteous to strangers. He did not wait for them to come up to the tent, but ran out to meet them, saying: "Do not pass by my home. Stop with us, and rest awhile in the shade of the tree. Let me have water brought, that you may bathe your feet and be refreshed as you rest. Then, before you go on, you must have something to eat."

The guests seemed glad to accept Abraham's hospitality, and he hurried into the tent to Sarah, saying, "Bake us some cakes as quickly as you can."

A Prayer Victory

While she was doing this, he ran out to the herd and brought a young calf, which he killed and dressed, ready for cooking.

In a short time the meal was ready, and Abraham brought the meat and cakes, also some butter and milk, out under the trees to the three strangers. As they were eating, one of the men said to Abraham, "Where is Sarah, thy wife?" Abraham replied, "She is in the tent."

Then said the stranger, "I will surely keep My promise to you, and in a little while Sarah shall have a son."

Then Abraham knew that one of his guests was Jehovah Himself.

When the men had finished their dinner, they rose up and started toward Sodom, and Abraham went part of the way with them.

Then God told Abraham that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah had become so very, very wicked that He was afraid they must be destroyed. He said, "I will go down and see if they are as wicked as they seem to be, and then I will know what must be done."

As Abraham looked off toward Sodom, perhaps he thought of his nephew, Lot, who lived there. Surely, with a good man like Lot in the city, there must be other good men.

Then he said to God: "Will you destroy the the righteous men with the wicked? If there are fifty righteous in the city, will you not spare the

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city for the sake of the fifty? It is not like God to slay the righteous with the wicked: shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

God said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous, I will spare all the place for their sakes."

Then Abraham said: "I have dared to ask you, though I am only a man. If there should be five less than fifty, will you destroy the city for lack of five?"

God said, "If I find forty-five, I will not destroy it."

"But," said Abraham, "suppose there should be only forty;" and God said, "I will not do it for forty's sake."

Then Abraham said, "O, let not the Lord be angry with me for speaking: There may be only thirty righteous people found;" and God said, "I will not do it if I find thirty there."

Abraham said, "Possibly there shall twenty be found there;" and God said, "I will not destroy it for twenty's sake."

Then said Abraham again: "O, let not the Lord be angry with me, and I will speak yet but this once. Perhaps ten shall be found." God said, "I will not destroy it for ten's sake."

Then God went on His way toward Sodom, and Abraham returned to his home, happy because he had asked God to spare Sodom, and knowing that he could trust Him.

In all the city of Sodom, God could not find

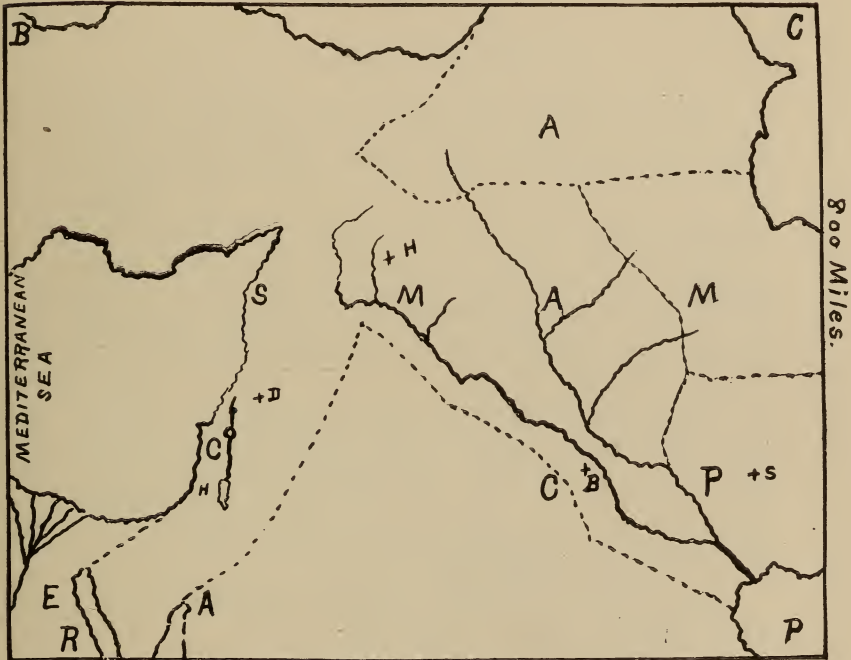
A Prayer Victory

ten righteous men, but He did not forget the prayer of Abraham, His friend.

He could not save the city, as Abraham had asked Him, but He did not destroy the righteous

MAP II.

1000 Miles.



people with the wicked. He sent messengers to Lot, telling him to take his family quickly and flee to the mountains.

Before Lot and his two daughters were out of sight of the city, fire came and destroyed it.

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As Abraham looked out from his tent door the next morning, instead of the city of Sodom he could see only a great cloud of smoke, but he was satisfied, even before he knew that Lot was safe, for he was sure that "The Judge of all the earth would do right."

MAP STUDY.

Add to Plan I the outlines of the Red, Black, and Caspian and Mediterranean Seas, and Persian Gulf, the Tigris and Euphrates and Nile Rivers, the Jordan River, Sea of Galilee, and Dead Sea.

Mark the outline of Armenia, according to the dotted lines, and complete the name.

Locate Hebron, and the probable sites of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The location of these cities is uncertain. They may have been either at the north or the south end of the Dead Sea. In either case, the smoke from the burning cities would have been visible to Abraham at Hebron.

REFERENCE.—Bible, Genesis, chapters 18 and 19. Geikie, Vol. I, page 389.

CHAPTER III.

A VICTORY OF FAITH.

ABRAHAM's tents were pitched on the hillsides near Beersheba. In the midst of the camp were two springs of cool, fresh water which bubbled up into the wells which the servants of Abraham dug.

About these wells were great stone troughs, into which the water was poured for the thirsty cattle to drink; and surrounding them were beautiful groves, which could be seen for a long distance.

In this beautiful home, the boy Isaac grew up; playing on the hillside, and helping to take care of his father's sheep.

When Isaac was almost a young man, one day Abraham heard God's voice calling him.

He replied, "Here am I."

Then God said: "Take now thy son, thine only son, even Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

Could God really mean this? Why, Isaac was the son God had promised, and for whom Abra-

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ham and Sarah had waited for so many years. Must they now give him up? But God had spoken, and His word must be obeyed.

Abraham did not say a word to any one about it, but told his servants to have his horse ready for him early in the morning. He then cut the wood and made things ready for an offering. Isaac was delighted when his father told him that he might go with him. A three days' journey with his father, through the woods, and over the plains, and at last into the mountains, would be a great treat.

Before sunrise Abraham called his son, and the two young men who were to go with them. The horse was saddled, the wood strapped on his back, and lunches put up for the journey; last of all, carried very carefully, they must also take the fire to kindle the wood.

Isaac said good-bye to his mother, and started off in high spirits. When noon came, they stopped and rested for a few hours while the sun was hot; then they went on again.

At night they rolled themselves up in their coats, and slept out under the stars. The next morning they were again on their way as the sun peeped over the horizon, and again rested during the heat of the day.

Still Abraham said nothing of God's message to him. He could not tell the light-hearted boy of the terrible ending to his happy journey. His

A Victory of Faith

heart must have been very sad, and he could not help wondering why God was going to take Isaac away from him.

The second night came, and Isaac, tired with the day's journey, was soon fast asleep. The young men, too, slept, but Abraham could only think of what he must do on the morrow. He could not sleep. He bowed his head in prayer, and as he talked with God, his faith rose; the victory was won. He could offer even his only son, Isaac, if God wanted that son, for he knew that God could still keep His promise to make of him a great nation. He did not know how God would do this, but he was sure now that God could even raise Isaac from the dead, if He wanted to.

The next morning Abraham saw in the distance the mountain to which God had sent him. He said to the young men: "Stay here with the horse. The lad and I will go yonder and worship, and come again to you."

He took the wood for the offering and gave it to Isaac to carry, and he himself took the fire and the knife; and they went on. They had quite a long walk, and as they traveled, they talked of many things; but finally Isaac happened to think that they were going to worship God, but had brought no sacrifice with them. Turning to Abraham in surprise, he said, "My father."

"Here am I, my son," he answered.

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"Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt sacrifice?"

Abraham replied, "My son, God will provide a lamb for a burnt offering."

Isaac may have thought this strange, but he was certain that his father knew, and they walked on together. They came at last to the place of which God had spoken. Abraham built an altar, then he took the wood which Isaac had brought, and laid it in order upon the altar; next he put the fire under it.

Isaac looked round for the lamb, which his father had said God would provide for the burnt offering.

Abraham did not look round, but at last telling Isaac of God's message, he took the ropes which he had brought with him, and bound him.

He then laid Isaac, his only son, on top of the wood on the altar, and raised his knife to slay him. But it was as though some one held his arm, for he stopped with his knife in the air.

"Abraham, Abraham," some one was calling him.

He answered, "Here am I."

Then God said: "Lay not thine hand upon the lad; neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from Me."

Then Abraham looked, and there close behind

A. Victory of Faith

him was a ram, caught by his horns in the underbrush. How thankful Abraham was to use his knife to cut the cords, and how quickly and joyfully he took his son, his only son, Isaac, from the altar!

He took the ram, killed it, and offered it as a burnt offering, and as he and Isaac worshiped God, they thanked Him for the burnt offering which He had provided.

Abraham gave to this place a name which means, "The Lord will provide."

Before the offering was all burned, God spoke to Abraham again, and said to him: "Because thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, . . . I will bless thee, . . . and multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven; . . . and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed My voice."

Then Abraham and Isaac started back to find the young men whom they had left. As they walked along, Abraham was very, very glad that he had not failed in this test which God had given him, for he not only had his son with him, but he had God's promise also.

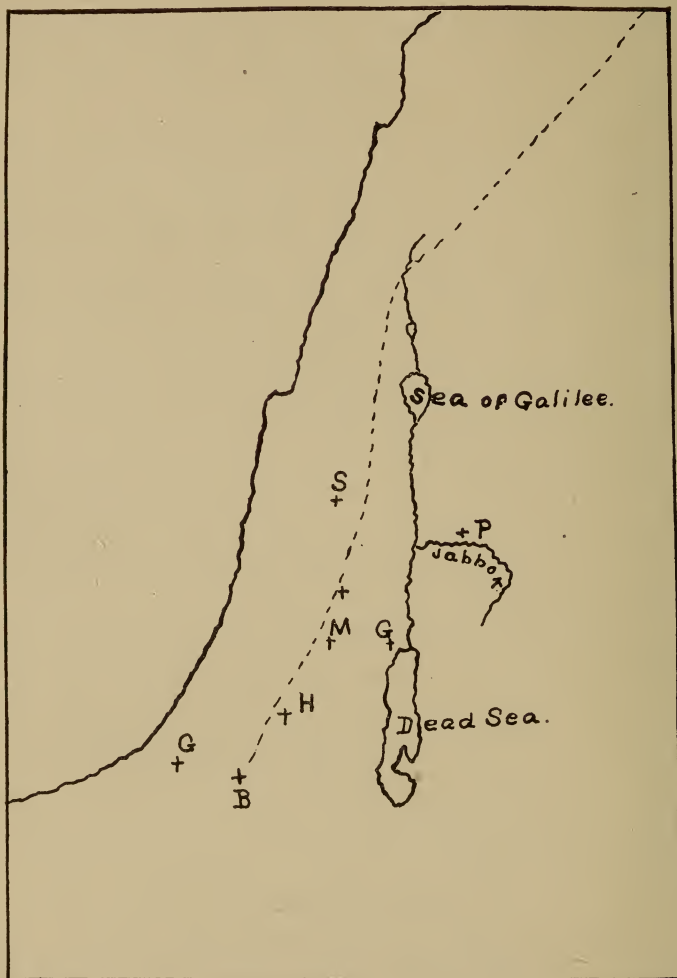
MAP STUDY.

Mark outline of Syria according to dotted lines in Map II, and complete the name.

Then draw enlarged map of Syria according to Map III.

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MAP III.



A Victory of Faith

Locate Beersheba and Moriah. (Probably the Moriah to which God sent Abraham, though this is not definitely known.)

REFERENCE.—Bible, Genesis, Chapter 22.
Geikie, Vol. I, page 396.

CHAPTER IV.

A QUEER KIND OF A VICTORY.

ISAAC was a rich man. He had a great many sheep and goats, and many servants to take care of them. He needed abundant crops and plenty of good pasture land, for so many men and herds, besides many wells of water.

There came a time of famine in the land. The wells and brooks dried up, so that there was no longer water for man or beast, nor was there any rain for the grass and crops. Isaac thought to go, as his father had done, into the land of Egypt; but when he, with his flocks and herds, and his men, reached the country of Abimelech, called Gerar, God spoke to him, saying: "Go not into Egypt, but stay in this place, and I will make room for you here." So Isaac remained in Gerar. Here he grew richer and richer, till finally Abimelech told him to go back to his own country, for he was afraid Isaac would become so great that he would want to be king. Abimelech knew nothing of God's promise to Isaac; but Isaac trusted God to keep His word. He yielded

A Queer Kind of a Victory

to the king, and went farther back into the country.

With so many flocks and herds they could not travel very fast, but at last they came to some wells which Abraham, Isaac's father, had dug.

Isaac thought this would be a good place to stop, for he was sure of plenty of water for his herds. He told his herdsmen to dig the rubbish out of the wells; for the Philistines had filled them up. He called the wells by the names that his father had given them. They dug, too, a new well of springing water. But when the herdsmen of Abimelech saw that they had digged the well and found water, they began to quarrel with them about it, and said it was theirs.

Isaac knew that it was his, but did not want to quarrel, so he gave orders to his herdsmen to move on.

Again they found wells which Abraham had dug, and cleared them of their rubbish. As they were settling down near these wells, whom should they see coming but the herdsmen of Abimelech. The herdsmen of Isaac did not believe in giving up every time, but Isaac said: "We will not quarrel. Let us go to another place."

The tents were taken down and the flocks gathered together, and again they journeyed. Coming to a place where there was good pasturage for the herds and flocks, they stopped. Here they found no well, but the herdsmen began at once to dig one.

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This time the Philistines did not follow them. Some people think that Isaac was a very strange man; but he thought he had won a victory each time he had given up to the Philistines and patiently moved to the next place.

The strange part of it is that God must have thought so too, for after the Philistines stopped following Isaac, and he had pitched his tents, and his herdsmen had dugged a well and found water, God spoke to him, and said, "Fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee."

Abimelech soon saw that the patient Isaac was in the care of a God, far more mighty than any of the idols he always worshiped, for he came to him and asked him to make a covenant with him. He said he would promise not to do Isaac or his family any harm, and he asked Isaac to promise him the same thing.

They rose up early the next morning, and made this covenant, and Abimelech went away in peace.

This day Isaac's servants came and told him that they had dug another well, and had found water, but they had no further trouble with the herdsmen of Abimelech.

MAP STUDY.

Locate Gerar on Map III, also study the climate of the country; the necessity of locating

A Queer Kind of a Victory

near a well; the custom of digging wells, naming them, and planting orchards about them.

REFERENCE.—Bible, Genesis 26, 11-32.
Geikie, page 422; Smith's Historical Geography, page 76.

CHAPTER V.

A CONQUEST OF A SELFISH NATURE.

TWO BOYS, Esau and Jacob, lived with their father and mother on a large farm near Beersheba. Their father, Isaac, was a rich man, and, beside his farm, had many sheep and cattle.

Jacob liked to play about the house, and help his mother. He was always on the lookout to make a trade, and was sure to come out ahead every time. Esau wanted to play he was a hunter, and even when a boy would take his spear and wander off a long way from home.

When they grew to be young men, Jacob was the one to help about the farm, while Esau was the hunter and brought venison for his father to eat.

One day he had been out hunting, and came home so tired and hungry that he could hardly walk. As he came near the tent which was their home, he smelled the dinner cooking. My, how good it smelled! He hurried to the door, and saw that it was Jacob, who was cooking a fine meal of lentils for himself.

He said to him, "Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage, for I am faint."

But Jacob cared nothing for Esau's hunger;

The Conquest of a Selfish Nature

he only thought he saw a chance to get ahead of his brother.

Esau was the oldest son, and to him would come, not only his father's riches, but also the right to be at the head of the family after his father's death; he would also be the family priest, and through him would come God's promise, that from his family would come a great nation. This was called his birthright.

Jacob had always wanted the birthright, so he said to Esau, "Sell me your birthright, and I will give you the lentils."

Esau was so hungry he did not care for anything else, so he said he would sell his birthright.

Jacob was afraid that, after he had something to eat he might change his mind, so he made him swear that he would sell him the birthright.

But even then Jacob was not satisfied. He had gained the birthright from Esau by unfair means, but before it was really his, his father would have to give it to him.

Instead of making a will, as people do now, in those days a father would give to the chosen son a special blessing.

Isaac loved Esau very much, and Jacob did not dare tell him of the way he had outwitted him, so he watched for an opportunity to get ahead of his father also.

Isaac was now an old man, and blind. He felt that he might not live much longer. So one

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morning he called Esau to him, and told him to go out into the field and kill a deer, and cook some of the venison for him; then he said he would give to him his blessing.

The time had come for Jacob to do something. If he was to get Esau's blessing, he must do it before Esau came back. He went out and killed a young kid. His mother helped him draw some of the skin over his hands and neck, for Esau's hands were rough and hairy, while Jacob's were smooth and soft. While Rebecca, his mother, cooked the meat and dressed it so that it tasted like venison, Jacob put on Esau's clothes.

He then took the meat to his father, and asked for the blessing. Isaac thought the voice sounded like that of Jacob, but when he felt of his hands and neck, they felt like those of Esau. Still he was not certain about him, so he asked him twice: "Art thou my very son, Esau?" And Jacob said, "I am." Then Isaac blessed him.

Jacob had scarcely gone from his father's presence, when Esau came with the real venison that his father loved. He hastened to cook it as Isaac wished, and brought it to him.

But Isaac, thinking that he had already eaten of Esau's meat, asked again, "Who art thou?"

And Esau replied, "I am thy son, thy first born, Esau."

Isaac was greatly troubled, and cried out: "Who, then, was it that came to me and brought

The Conquest of a Selfish Nature

me venison? For I have given to him the blessing."

When Esau found that Jacob had so deceived his father, and gained his blessing, he was very angry. He forgot that he had already sold his birthright to Jacob, and declared that he would kill him.

Jacob knew that he would keep his word. His only safety lay in going away where Esau could not find him. This was hard, for he loved his home and his mother very much, but he had to go.

His mother planned for him to go back to Padan-aram, the land where her people lived. It was a long journey of four hundred miles, and a very lonely one for a young man to take all alone.

As Jacob walked along day after day, he must have had time to do a good deal of thinking. It must have made it seem even more lonely, as he thought how he had cheated Esau, and deceived his father, and how he was paying for wanting the best of everything for himself, by having to go away from all those whom he loved. In telling of these days afterward, he said that he prayed to God, "who answered him in the day of his distress."

One night he rolled himself up in his cloak and went to sleep, with nothing but a stone for his pillow.

As he slept, he saw a ladder reaching up into heaven and God's angels going up and down on

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it all night. At the top he saw God standing, and God spoke to him, saying: "I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham, thy father; and the God of Isaac. The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. . . . And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again unto this land."

These were almost the same words God had spoken to Abraham in this same place, and right beside Jacob, though he may not have known it, was the altar which Abraham had built.

When he awoke, he thought: "God is in this place, just as He was at home, and He is taking care of me, even though I have been so mean and deceitful." He called the place Bethel, which means God's house. Before he went on, he promised God that if He would take care of him, and bring him back home again, he would give Him one-tenth of all he had.

That was much for Jacob to promise, for he had always wanted everything for himself; but it seemed as though Jacob really meant to try to think of some one besides himself.

Jacob was gone twenty-one years, and all that time God did take care of him; but, though he did not forget his promise of the tenth, somehow it just seemed to be in Jacob to be mean and underhanded, and he did many things that were wrong. He did not have an easy time, for Laban,

The Conquest of a Selfish Nature

his uncle, for whom he worked, was unjust many times. Still Jacob prospered, till he had many cattle and sheep. Then he took his family, for he had married in that country, and all his possessions, and started back to his own country.

It was a long procession, some of the lambs and kids were young, and there were many children, so they went very slowly.

As they came near the country of Edom, messengers came to Jacob with the news that Esau, his brother, was coming to meet him.

Jacob was very much afraid. He thought, "Now Esau will kill me." He sent very valuable presents to Esau, hoping to soften his heart, and then arranged to protect Rachel, his loved wife, and her son Joseph, if Esau should attack them.

When night came they camped by the brook Jabbok, but Jacob could not sleep.

In the night an angel of God came and wrestled with him. No one knows just how this was; but that night Jacob saw how mean and little he had been. He saw that Jacob was not the only man in the world, nor was he strong enough to have his own way against God.

Somehow, during those long, dark hours, while he was alone with God, God took the old Jacob—the mean, deceitful, selfish Jacob—away; and in the early morning, when the sun rose, it shone not on the old Jacob, but on the new Jacob, to whom during the night God had given the new name of Israel.

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From this time, though Israel is still the shrewd business man, we find that God's Spirit had conquered the old Jacob, and made of him the kind of a man after whom God's own chosen people could be called.

MAP STUDY.

Turn back to Map II and mark the outline of Mesopotamia according to dotted lines.

Locate Beersheba, Bethel, Haran.

Trace journey of Jacob on Maps II and III, from Beersheba north over the mountain ridges to Bethel, where occurred his dream; thence north across the Esdraelon Valley, on up the west side of the Jordan, past Lake Merom; thence east to Haran; a distance usually given from two hundred and fifty to four hundred miles.

On the return journey, leaving Haran, come down the east side of the Jordan to the Brook Jabbok, where Jacob wrestled with the angel; thence across the Jordan to Succoth, finally reaching Shechem.

Add names of places at points marked with crosses.

REFERENCE.—Bible, Genesis, chapters 27 to 35. For the general features of the country through which Jacob must have passed—Rand & McNally Bible Atlas, page 31.

The Journey of Jacob, Geikie, Vol. I, page 494, Shechem, Historical Geography, page 120.

CHAPTER VI.

SUGGESTIONS FOR MAKING RELIEF MAPS.

FOR making the relief map of Palestine, secure boards one foot long by eight inches wide for each member of the class. This will give a map having a scale of fifteen miles to an inch. Draw on the board the coast outline of Palestine, from a point opposite Mt. Lebanon to a point a little south of Gaza.

Also draw the outline of the Jordan River, Sea of Galilee, and Dead Sea.

In making this map the leader should have a good relief map of Palestine for an outline, if possible; but if this can not be secured, any good map giving the physical features of the country will serve.

The Rand & McNally Bible Atlas will be invaluable in the preparation of maps.

In order that the proper depression of the Dead Sea and Jordan Valley may be maintained, the Mediterranean coast line must be elevated.

The heights of the principal elevations are given in the accompanying charts, and such phys-

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ical features as may be of help in making these maps.

In the use of these, one must remember that there is very little level land in Palestine, and that foothills of various heights will fill the spaces between the mountains, while even the plains are undulating.

Estimate the distance between the level of the Dead Sea and the Coast Plain and cover the board to that depth with the mache. Next, locate the principal elevations and build the mountains or hills to their proper height, using the gauge as suggested.

With lead pencil or water colors, mark the boundaries of plains and fill in, making the surface undulating. Study the map, giving the physical features of the country, and build the rest of the map accordingly.

The Mediterranean, Dead Sea, Sea of Galilee, and rivers may be painted blue to indicate water.

When the map is finished, it may be tinted with water colors to indicate the different countries or different rock formations.

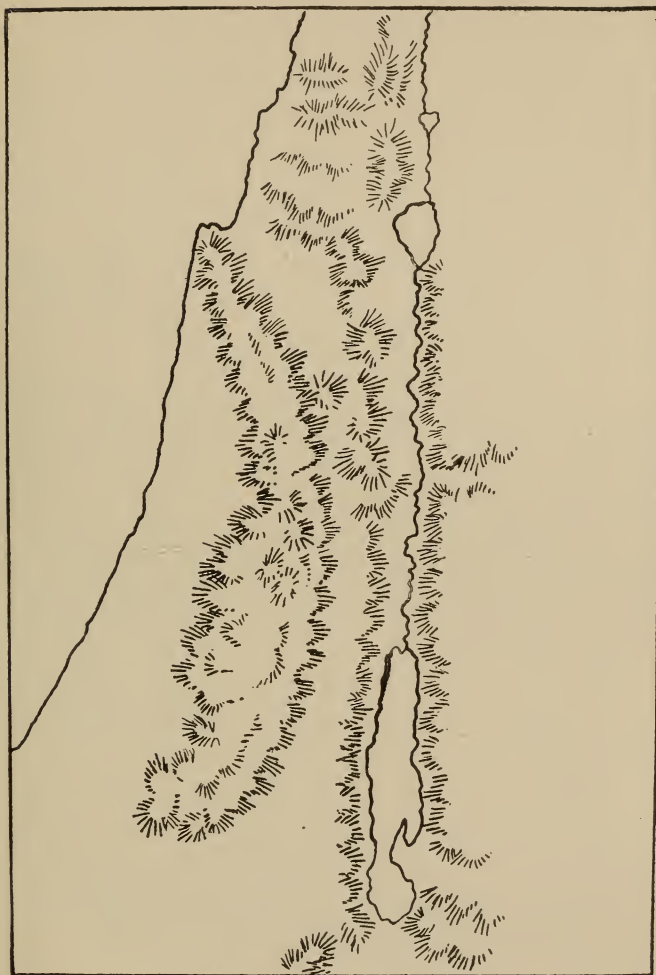
The cities may be marked with a red dot, and the mountains colored in a chocolate brown, if desired.

MATERIAL.

A clean mache, accessible to all, is made of three parts of salt to one part of flour and enough water to make it the consistency of putty. This

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MAP IV.



PHYSICAL MAP OF PALESTINE.

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may be prepared beforehand, and kept in a damp cloth till the hour of meeting.

Paper pulp may also be used for these maps. This may be made from blotting paper, or unsized paper, upon which there is no ink, by tearing it into bits and boiling it till it is reduced to a pulp. It should then be drained, and each child be supplied with a sponge to absorb the moisture.

When finished, the map may be taken from the board and glued to a piece of cardboard, or may be glued to the board.

In making the map, take a small cross section, each week, moistening the edges thoroughly before beginning on a second section, in order that the map may not crack.

A gauge for measuring elevations may be easily made by taking a steel knitting needle and filing or scratching it to indicate the inch, half, quarter, and eighth.

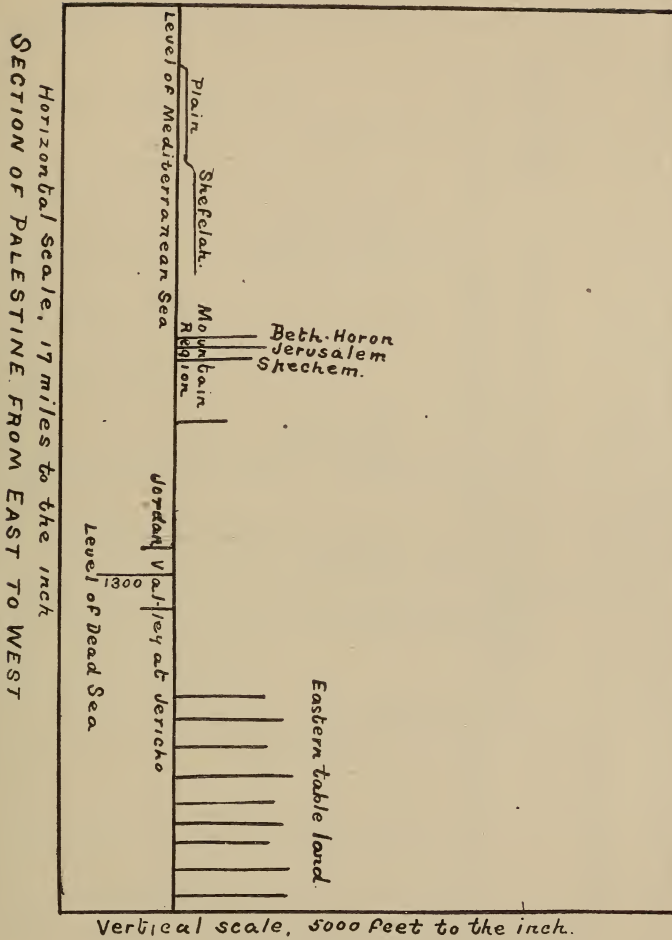
This may be put into the mache to measure the elevation, and the mache pressed back into place, so as not to leave a hole.

If each one can not be supplied with a ruler having the above markings, narrow strips of cardboard may be used and marked as suggested for the needle. A marked ruler of some kind will be necessary for each Junior.

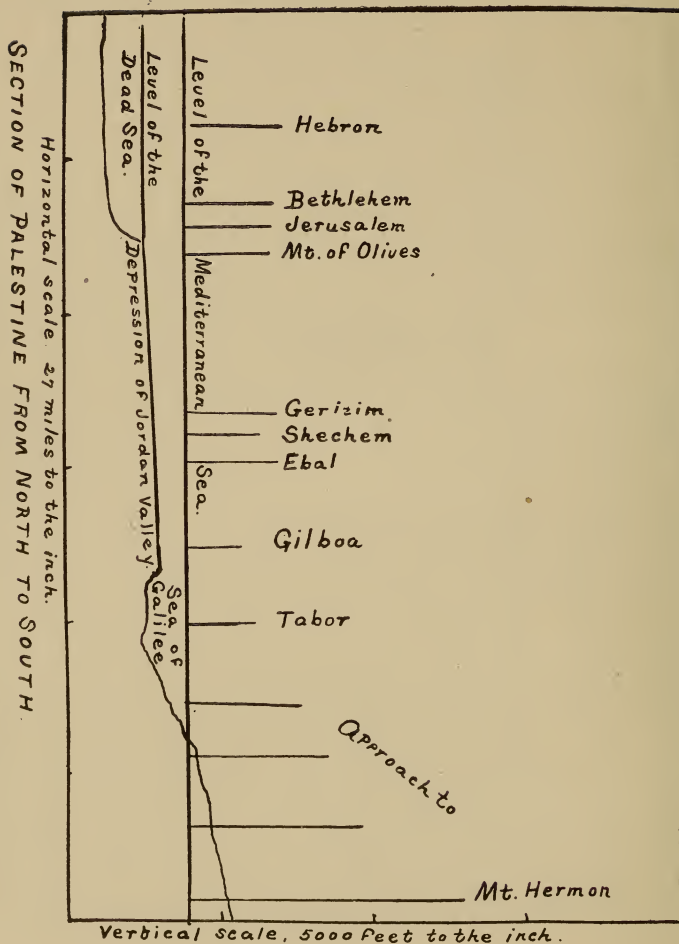
A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW.

A narrow plain extends along the entire coast line, broken only by Mt. Carmel. Just south of

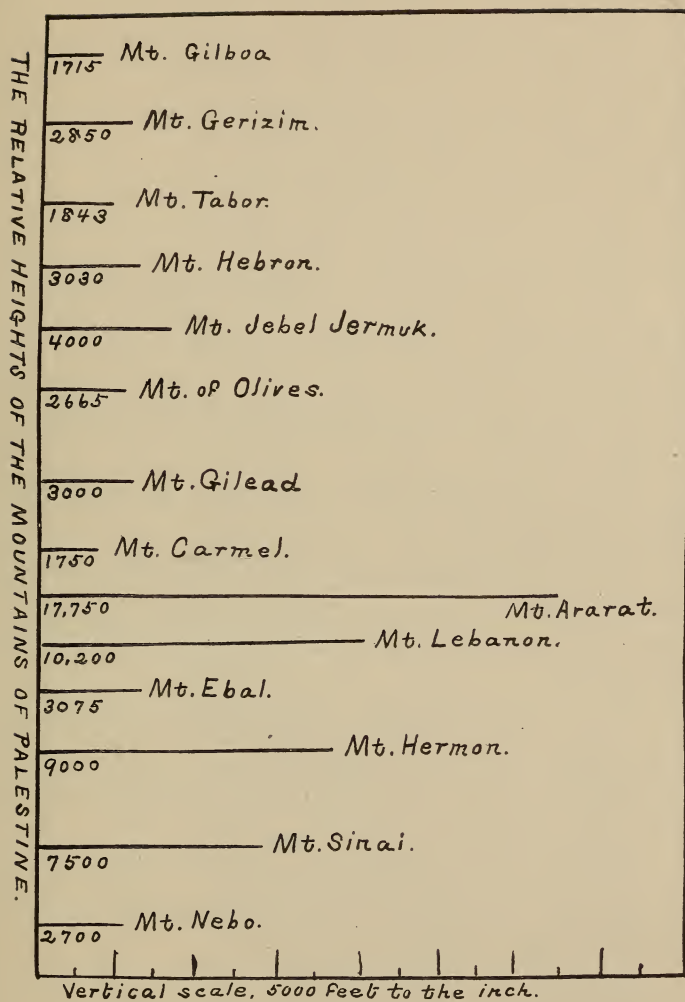
A Map Lesson



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the mountain it is eight miles wide, and increases to twenty miles at the southern end.

It has an undulating surface varying from one to two hundred feet above the sea level. Just east of Mt. Carmel the plain pushes inland, forming the Plains of Esdraelon. This is a Y-shaped valley, with the stem of the Y toward the coast. Its extent is about fourteen miles north and south, and eight east and west; its elevation is 250 feet.

West of the Maritime Plain is a region of foothills extending as far north as Mt. Gilboa. Its average elevation is five hundred feet. It extends to the mountain region which forms the backbone of the country.

The mountain regions may be divided into four sections:

First, the northern section, extending to the Sea of Galilee, with an average height of 2,800 feet, and its greatest elevation, at Jebel Jermuk, 4,000 feet.

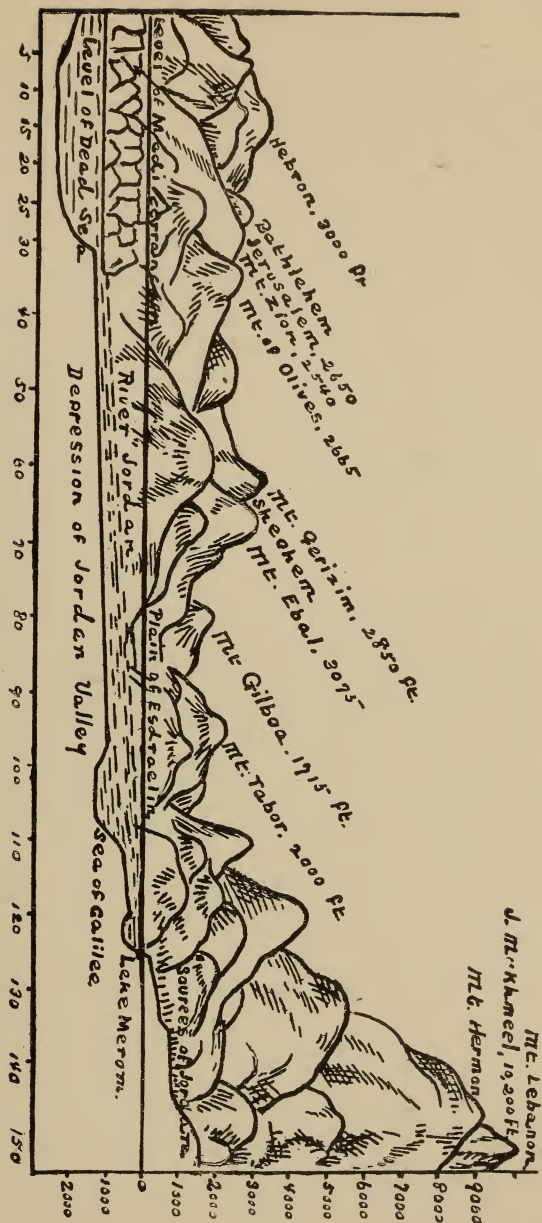
The second section, including the Plains of Esdraelon, and extending to Samaria, average elevation 1,800 feet, with the northwest slopes gentle, and the southeast precipitous.

Third, the hill country of Samaria and Judea; a succession of mountains and valleys, the former ranging from 2,000 to 3,000 feet.

Fourth, the south country, south of Hebron, and sloping in a series of low hills to the desert.

The Jordan Valley, west of the mountain

HURLBUT'S REVISED NORMAL OUTLINES.



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regions, descends from Lake Merom, where it is seven feet above the sea level, to 628 feet below the level at the Sea of Galilee. From there it descends 610 feet more to the Dead Sea, flowing through a gorge sixty-five miles long, and from two to eight miles wide, with barren cliffs on either side, to the plains of Jericho, where it is fourteen miles wide, and encompassed by mountains 4,000 feet high.

The Eastern Table Land.—East of the Jordan is a lofty plateau. The mountains are higher and steeper than on the west side of the river.

CHAPTER VII.

VICTORY OVER DIFFICULTIES.

JOSEPH was seventeen years old. For several years he had helped his older brothers take care of his father's sheep. He was not very happy with them, for they were often unkind to him, and he wished for the day when his father would think he was old enough to take care of his own flocks, by himself.

At the time of our story, the sheep had been feeding near the home of Jacob, but now the grass was short, and there was not enough food for them; so Jacob's older sons took them away to find better pasturage. Joseph did not go with them, but, after several days, his father said to him: "Do not your brothers feed the flocks in Shechem? Come, and I will send you to them."

Joseph was ready to go, and Jacob sent him off, saying, "Go, see whether it is well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks, and bring me word again."

It was quite a journey to Shechem, and Joseph started off, proud to be intrusted with the message. As he came to the hilltop near Shechem, he looked for his brothers, but they were not to be seen. He

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shaded his eyes with his hand that he might see farther, and looked in every direction. Then he went to the next hill and again he looked, but still no sheep, and no sign of his brothers.

As he was looking about, not knowing which way to go, he met a man, who said to him, "For what are you looking?"

Joseph said: "I am looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they feed their flocks?"

"Why, yes," said the man, "I heard them say they were going to Dothan."

This meant another long walk, but Joseph started off, glad to know where to go. As he came near Dothan, he could see his brothers and the sheep. Perhaps he called to them, for they saw him coming long before he reached them. They knew their father must have sent him, but they were not glad to see him. They thought their father loved Joseph more than he did them, and they were jealous, so they said: "Now is our chance. Let us slay him. We can tell our father that a wild animal killed him."

His oldest brother, Reuben, was kinder than the others, and said, "Do not let us kill him, but let us put him down this old, dry well, where he can not get out." He thought when the others were not looking he would take him out and send him back home. But Reuben had to leave them to attend to his sheep, and as the others were eating their dinner, they saw a company of

Victory Over Difficulties

Egyptian traders with their camels, and the goods they had bought. They were now on their way homè. Quickly Joseph's brothers drew him up from the well and sold him to one of these Egyptians. "This," they said, "will be a good way to get rid of him, and yet not kill him, for he is our brother, and we do not want to do that."

When Reuben returned, Joseph was gone; but though he wept, and rent his clothes, his brothers did not tell him what they had done with the boy.

They took Joseph's coat off before they sold him, and before they went home they dipped it in blood and carried it to Jacob, saying: "We have found this; is it Joseph's?" Even Reuben dared not tell what he knew.

Jacob was very, very sad, for he did love Joseph more than any of his other children, and now he believed the wild beasts had killed him. Joseph, too, must have been sad to think that his brothers would sell him to be a slave.

When he reached Egypt he was again sold, and his new master was one of the king's officers.

The best loved son of a rich and powerful man was now only a slave in a strange country. He might have been forgiven for thinking that God had forgotten him, but his trust never failed. He thought, "I am only a servant, but I will be the very best servant I know how to be, and God will take care of me."

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Before long his master saw that Joseph was the best slave he had ever had, and he made him the overseer of all the slaves, and, in time, of all his great riches. Joseph was a young man to be an overseer, but he said to himself, "If God will help me, I will be the very best overseer that I can be."

God did help him, and his master trusted him more and more. Once Joseph was tempted to do a great wrong; but a boy or a man who trusts God to help him to do his best is not going to be beaten by any temptation, and Joseph was not beaten.

He did right, but the one who tempted him to do wrong was very angry, as such people always are when they fail, and told a cruel lie about Joseph. His master believed the lie, and Joseph was sent to prison.

It was pretty hard to be a prisoner as well as a slave, but Joseph knew he had done right, and that made him brave. Again he made up his mind what he would do. This time he said, "I will be the best kind of a prisoner that I know how to be," and asked God to help him.

The Bible says that in prison, "The Lord was with Joseph, and was with everything that he did, and made it prosper."

The keeper of the prison soon found him a man whom he could trust, and put him in charge of the other prisoners. Under his care were two

Victory Over Difficulties

of the officers of the king's household, his chief baker and his butler, who had in some way made the king angry. Each of these men had a dream while in prison, which troubled him, for he could not understand it.

In those days men had no Bible, as we have, and God often spoke to them in their dreams to tell them the things which He wished them to know.

These men did not know the Lord, but because He loved Joseph, God showed to him the meaning of their dreams, and Joseph explained it to them. The baker's dream meant that he should die in prison; the butler's, that the king would forgive him, and it happened just as Joseph had said.

In his gratitude, the butler promised to ask the king to help Joseph, but when he was set free he forgot all about him.

But after a time the king had two dreams. None of his wise men could tell their meaning. Then the butler remembered Joseph, and told the king about him. Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and when he found that God told Joseph the meaning of his dreams, he made him the chief ruler in his kingdom.

What kind of a ruler was he? Why, just the best kind that he knew how to be, of course. The boy that was the best boy he knew how to be; the slave that could not be overcome by temp-

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tation; the prisoner that did his best, with God's help, could not help being a good ruler.

God had told him that Pharaoh's dream meant that for seven years the crops would be abundant, but that after that there would be seven years of famine, when nothing would grow; and Joseph began at once to save the corn during the years of plenty, so there would be enough to eat when the famine came.

But where were Joseph's brothers all this time? They were still taking care of Jacob's sheep. When the famine came, it extended into Canaan, and Jacob sent his sons down to Egypt, for he had heard there was corn there.

As they traveled over the same road that Joseph had gone over when they sold him to be a slave, they must have thought about him, and wondered if he was still living. Perhaps they wondered how it must feel to be a slave, and belong to some one else, for they had never heard a word from Joseph since the morning they sold him.

As soon as they came near to the king's house, and asked for corn, Joseph recognized them, but they did not know him. They never thought of his being a ruler and wearing such fine clothes. As Joseph looked at them, he must have thought of all their unkindness to him, and of the hard times that they had made him have. He might have thought, as they did, the day they saw him coming at Dothan, "Now is my chance."

Victory Over Difficulties

He did not tell them who he was, but was very stern with them. He asked them all about their father and their younger brother, whom he had loved, and whom they told him they had left at home. He sold them the corn, but had every man's money put back in his sack secretly. He then sent them home, still not knowing him, but told them they could not have any more corn unless they brought their younger brother with them.

Joseph knew they would have to come back, but, O! it seemed such a long time to wait, for this was his opportunity.

At last they came, and Benjamin with them. Joseph could wait no longer. He said to them, "I am Joseph, your brother."

His brothers were so frightened they could not speak a word, for they thought, "Now Joseph will punish us."

What was this that Joseph was saying? "Come near to me. Do not be grieved with yourselves that ye sold me into Egypt."

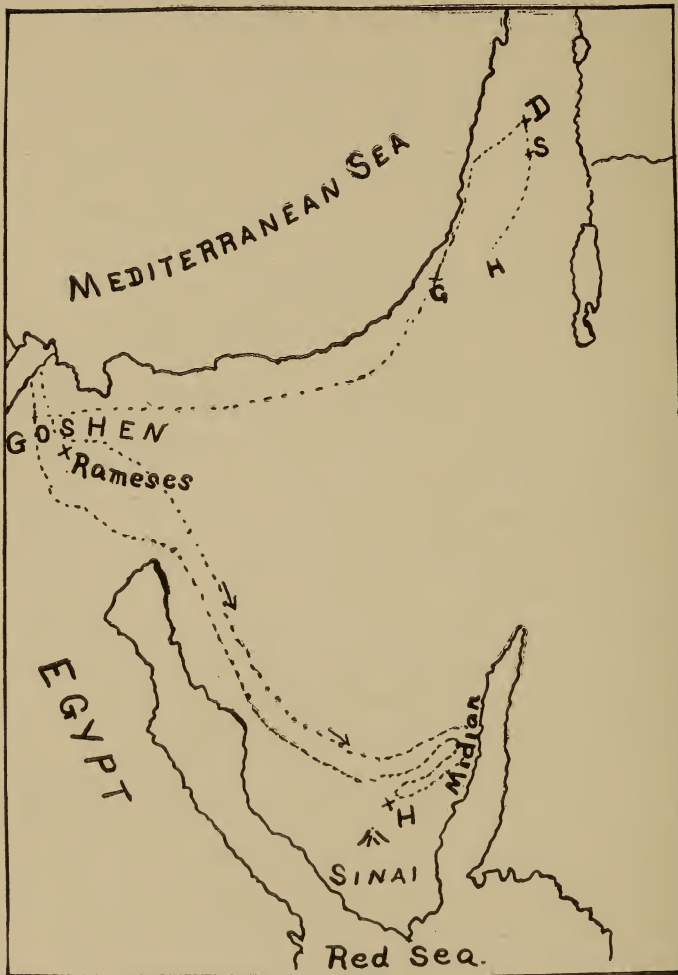
They could not believe it possible!

Yes, it was Joseph's chance to forgive them, and to be to them the very best brother that he could be. He had conquered in every hard thing that came to him, and now it was easy just to forgive the unkindness of his brothers, and forget all about it.

But he must have his father with him. The brothers went back to Canaan, and brought Jacob,

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MAP IV.



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now an old man, and all his family, down into Egypt, where Joseph gave them a home.

When Jacob saw Joseph and knew all about him, he was so happy to find him once more that he felt his work was done; he had nothing more to wish for, and he said to Joseph: "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, and thou art yet alive."

MAP STUDY.

Turn to Map II, mark boundary of Egypt, and complete name.

Make outline Map IV, including Syria, Egypt, and part of Arabia, as given in Map II.

Trace journey of Joseph, first on outline map, then relief map, from Hebron up through the fertile valley, gradually ascending till he reaches the high land on which Shechem stands; thence to Dothan. From there, with the caravan of traders, moving south and east along the coast to Joppa, then further inland to avoid the sandstorms, passing through Gaza, and on south across the desert to the Nile River.

Note the change in climate and scenery as he travels south.

REFERENCE.—Bible, Genesis, chapters 37 to 47. Geikie, Vol. I, page 447.

CHAPTER VIII.

A GREAT CONQUEROR.

GOD's chosen people were slaves. After the famine they had remained in the land of Egypt, and for Joseph's sake the king made them his friends; but a new king came to the throne, who did not know Joseph; then another king, and another, and each one was more unkind to the Israelites, whom they called the Hebrew people.

The Israelites were now a great nation, and they must have their freedom, but who would make them free? The king of Egypt might, but instead he gave orders to their masters to be more cruel to them than they had been.

They could not fight for their freedom, because slaves had no chance to learn to be soldiers, and besides, who would be their leader?

There was no one to fight for them. What could they do? Just one thing; they could pray to God. Sometimes, perhaps, they thought that God did not hear their prayers, for their Egyptian masters made them work harder and harder.

They did not know that up in the palace of the King Pharaoh, God was doing a most wonderful thing for them. They must have a leader before there was any hope for freedom, but that

A Great Conqueror

leader would have to know a great deal more than a poor slave could learn; and though they did not know it, God Himself was training such a man.

Many years before, a tiny Hebrew baby was hidden in the tall rushes near the river, by his mother, who was trying to save him from the cruel Egyptian soldiers. And God put it into the heart of the daughter of the king to go to the river, and there she found the baby.

The princess loved the beautiful little boy, and took him from his cradle in the rushes. Then the baby's sister, who had been watching, O! so anxiously, from a hiding place near by, came bravely out, and said, "Shall I not get you a nurse for him?" The princess was pleased, and the little maid ran quickly and found the baby's own mother. She dared not tell the princess that the baby was hers, but was happy because she might live with him and care for him.

And so it happened that in the palace of Pharaoh the Hebrew boy, Moses, was living as an adopted son. He went to school, and was taught everything that a king's son should know; and since his nurse had been his own Hebrew mother, he had also been taught about God and about his own people.

The palace in which Moses lived was so large, it was like a small town. In the center was the great building where the king's rooms were, and also the banquet hall; all about were smaller build-

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ings of different sizes, connected with each other by little bridges, under which were small streams of water; which made the palace look like a town built upon islands. All the buildings were gaily painted, and at every gate were flag-staffs floating red and blue flags.

At one side was a thick grove of trees, and in this was the palace of the women. In some of the rooms the carpets were of blue and silver, and the furniture was beautifully embroidered and decorated with plumes.

At the banquets which Moses, as the king's son, must have attended, some of the dishes, made of gold, were so large and heavy, they were brought into the banquet hall on wheels. Flowers and fruits were everywhere, and gaily dressed slaves served the guests.

There was nothing a boy or young man could want, that Moses might not have in this home. But down in his heart, Moses knew that he belonged to the despised Hebrew slaves, and as he grew to manhood he thought more and more about his people. As he saw how cruelly they were treated, he was very much troubled. Some one ought to help them. Why didn't they fight for themselves? he often asked himself. Then he would go back to a great banquet or excursion on the river, and forget all about them.

But God did not forget, and in a few days Moses would again remember the Hebrew chil-

A Great Conqueror

dren. At last, one day something down in his heart said, "You are the one to help your people." Moses knew it was God speaking to him, but how could he, the king's son, help the slaves? He might talk to Pharaoh, but he knew that would do no good. The only way was for him to give up his home in the palace, put aside his fine clothes, his horses, and everything the king gave to him, and go back and be the leader of the Hebrew people, and, perhaps, just be a slave with them.

As he thought about it, it did not seem as though any one could expect him to do this, and surely it would be very, very ungrateful, after all the king had done for him.

Day after day he thought about it. One day as he saw an Egyptian abusing one of the Hebrew people, he could stand it no longer, and in his heart he said, "I will do it." The Bible says from this time "He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

We might now call him Moses the Conqueror instead of Moses the son of Pharaoh's daughter, for he had conquered the great enemy, selfishness.

The next day Moses again saw an Egyptian strike a Hebrew. He thought the time had come to take the leadership of his people, and he killed the Egyptian, expecting that the Hebrews would understand by this that he was ready to lead them,

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and that they would follow him in a rebellion against Pharaoh.

But God's time had not come, and God knew that Moses needed more training. Then, too, the Hebrews did not know that Moses was now the conqueror; they thought he was still the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and they did not rally about him.

Pharaoh was very angry and would have killed Moses, had he not fled to the desert.

Here he lived for forty years as a shepherd, a conqueror, being trained by the Great Commander to be one of the greatest leaders there has ever been in the world.

MAP STUDY.

On Map IV mark outline of Egypt. Locate Egypt, Goshen, the Nile River; Rameses; the home of Moses in the palace of Pharaoh. Midian (the peninsula of Arabia).

Trace the journey of Moses, as indicated by the dotted lines, noting the great change between the fruitful land of Goshen and the barren wilderness of the Sinai Peninsula.

Also make the acquaintance of the Arabs of the desert.

REFERENCE.—Bible, Exodus, chapter 2. The Palace of Pharaoh, Geikie, Vol. II, page 92. The Flight of Moses, Geikie, Vol. II, page 107. The Arabs, Geikie, Vol. II, page 108. Sinai Peninsula, Rand & McNally Bible Atlas, page 43, par. 2.

CHAPTER IX.

A GREAT CONQUEROR—CONTINUED.

THE Egyptian task-masters have become so cruel that the Hebrews cry to God daily for deliverance. Even Moses is gone now, and in their sorrow they fear that God has forgotten them.

Moses thinks again and again of his people back there in the cities, but he has learned the great lesson of meekness. He no longer tries to do God's work in his own way, but is willing to wait until God speaks.

At last God does speak. Alone on the mountain-side with his flocks, one day, Moses suddenly stops; what is that he sees? It must be a fire, but he did not know any one was near. He goes toward it; yes, it certainly is a bush on fire! But look, the bushes about it do not burn! How is that?

He watches; it is very strange. The bush does not seem to burn up at all. He must see what it is. But a voice stops him.

Some one is calling: "Moses, Moses."

He look in every direction, but sees no one; the voice seemed to come right out of the fire.

He answers, "Here am I."

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Somehow, as he answered, he knew that it was God who spoke to him, and he was not surprised when the voice said: "I am the God of thy father," but he "hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God."

God then told him how the Hebrews were crying to Him day and night, to be delivered out of slavery to the Egyptians, and said to him: "Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

This was just what Moses thought he could do so many years ago, but now he was afraid. He told God that he was not a great enough man to do this; but God said, "Certainly I will be with thee."

"But," Moses said, "the people will not believe in me any more than they did the last time, and they will not follow me."

God said, "What is that in thy hand?"

"A rod."

Then God said, "Cast it on the ground." And he cast it on the ground and it became a serpent, and Moses fled from it.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Put forth thy hand, and take it by the tail." Moses did this, and it became again a rod in his hand.

God also gave Moses other signs, that he might prove to the people that God had sent him.

"But," said Moses again, "I am slow of speech,

A Great Conqueror, Continued

and I am afraid that I shall not say things in the right way."

God told him that Aaron, his brother, should go with him, and be his mouth-piece, saying to the people whatever Moses told him to.

Moses knew that, even though he was not a great enough man for this work, God would help him, and he forgot himself and his fears, and started back to Egypt.

The children of Israel were glad, indeed, to make him their leader, and he appealed to Pharaoh in God's name, asking him to let the people go. But Pharaoh would not listen to him.

At first he simply asked that they might just go out into the wilderness for a few days to worship God, but afterward he asked that they might go, saying nothing about their return.

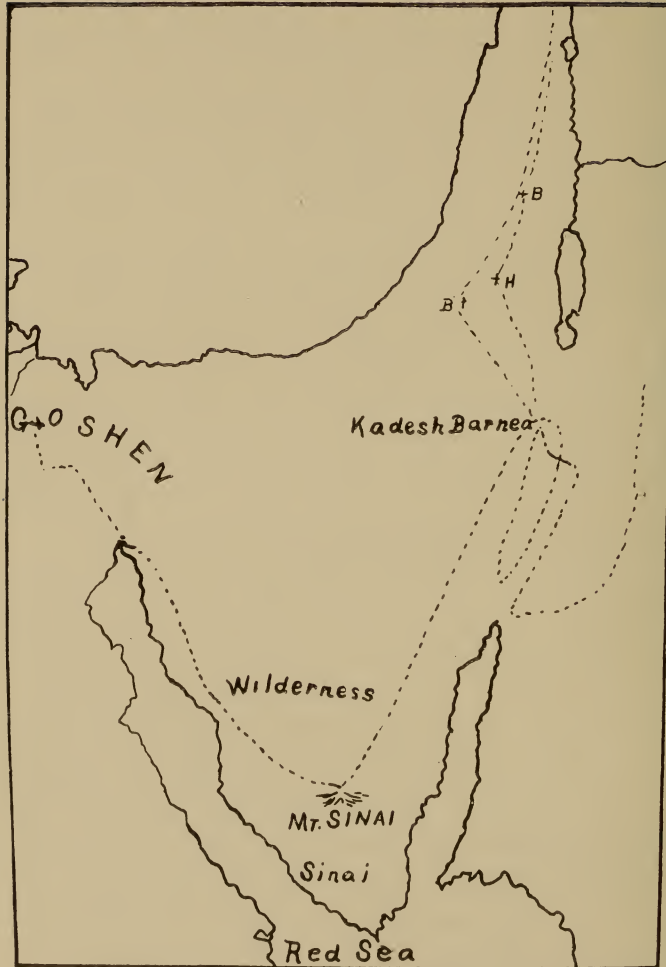
Each time Pharaoh refused. God sent great trouble to the Egyptians. Then Pharaoh would say that they might go. As soon as God took the trouble away he changed his mind and refused to let them go. Nine times Pharaoh said they might go, and then would not let them, till God brought a trouble so great that the Egyptians begged them to go, and gave them jewels and many other things.

After the Israelites had gone, Pharaoh was sorry he had let them go, and with his army followed them.

The children of Israel were encamped beside the Red Sea, and Pharaoh's army marching upon

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MAP V.



A Great Conqueror, Continued

them. What could they do? They did not know how to fight, and besides, they were not armed.

God did not forget His promise to be with Moses. He put a great cloud behind the Israelites, so that Pharaoh could not see them. But this was not all, for the waters of the Red Sea parted, leaving a path over which all the great host of Israel passed safely; but, just as Pharaoh and his army reached the shore and tried to follow them, the water rolled back into its place.

It had been a long, hard struggle, but not a spear had been used, and not an Israelite had been killed; but one of the strongest and most cruel kings of Egypt had been conquered.

Moses, the man who had conquered his own fears, because God called him, had led his people, the children of Israel, to freedom!

MAP STUDY.

Mark the outline of Arabia on Map II.

Draw Map V, using same general outline as in Map IV, adding the location of Kadesh Barnea, and Mt. Sinai. Trace the wanderings of the children of Israel in the wilderness.

Give a vivid picture of the wilderness life, marking the camping places at the Red Sea, Mt. Sinai, and Kadesh Barnea, with tents.

REFERENCE.—Bible, Exodus, chapters 3 to 14. Geikie, Vol. II, page 115.

CHAPTER X.

A SUCCESSION OF VICTORIES.

SOUTH of the land of Edom is the great desert; on every side are barren mountains, caverns, and mighty rocks. Amid these rocks a great army lies encamped.

But what a strange looking army! Not a uniform is to be seen: indeed, the soldiers wear the very clothes that their fathers wore when they left Egypt forty years ago.

Look at that camp-ground! There are more tents than one could count. There are great herds of sheep and oxen. Yes, and there in the center is a church, a tent church! Who ever heard of an army carrying a church around with it? But even this is not the queerest sight, for in this army are not only men, but also women, boys and girls, and even babies. Let us ask this man, standing near, about it.

"Yes," he says, in answer to our inquiry, "it is a strange army. Many years ago God called these people out of the land of Egypt to go into the Promised Land, but they disobeyed Him and did not trust even such a great leader as God.

A Succession of Victories

"For forty years they have wandered in this wilderness, while God was teaching them to trust and obey Him. The native tribes have made war upon them again and again; many times they have been without water; they have had no food, except the manna which God sent from heaven: but now God has commanded them to take possession of the Promised Land, for which they started so many years ago."

"Where is this Promiesd Land?"

"Only a little march from here; just north, the other side of the land of Edom."

While we talk with the soldier, something has happened in the camp. See, they are taking down their tents! Yes, surely they are preparing to start.

All are ready. The order comes, "Forward, march!" Ho, for the land of Canaan!

But, look, where are they going? The Promised Land is to the north, but the orders are to march south to the Red Sea, back where they have been all these years.

What does it mean? The people are so disappointed they begin to complain.

Moses has sent a message to the king of Edom, asking for permission for the Israelites to march through his country and promising that they will do no damage, but the king is afraid of so large an army, and says, "No." There is no other way to get to Canaan except to march back round the

Stories of Bible Victories

mountain and up on the other side. It is a hard march, and the people are so unhappy about it that they make much trouble, both for themselves, and Moses; but at last the journey is completed, and they go into camp by the Brook Zered.

Then comes the order: "Up, cross the stream Zered!" What a shout went up from that camp! It is just a little stream, but the boys and girls in that camp, yes, and many of the men and women, too, have never seen a stream of running water; and then, the other side!

O, the trees and flowers, the grass and grain! Think of having vegetables and fruit to eat, and all the water that is needed for the cattle!

No time was lost in breaking camp that day. The stream was crossed, and O, how happy every one was; but the land of Moab was still between them and the Promised Land.

God had said, "You must not injure Moab," so Moses sent to the king of Moab, as he had to the king of Edom. He asked that his army might pass through the country. He said: "We will keep in the highways, and not touch your crops; and we will buy from you what we need to eat."

The king of Moab also was afraid, and would not allow them to cross the country, but he did let them pass along the edge of it.

They marched north till they came to the Brook Arnon, where they must enter the countries of Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites, which

A Succession of Victories

were between them and the river Jordan. Again Moses asked to cross the country, but these kings, like the others, said, "No," and Sihon, with his army, marched out against them. There was now nothing to do but to fight.

In the first battle the Amorites were defeated, and Sihon slain; the second battle really made the Israelites masters of all this country, and they made Heshbon, the city of Sihon, their headquarters.

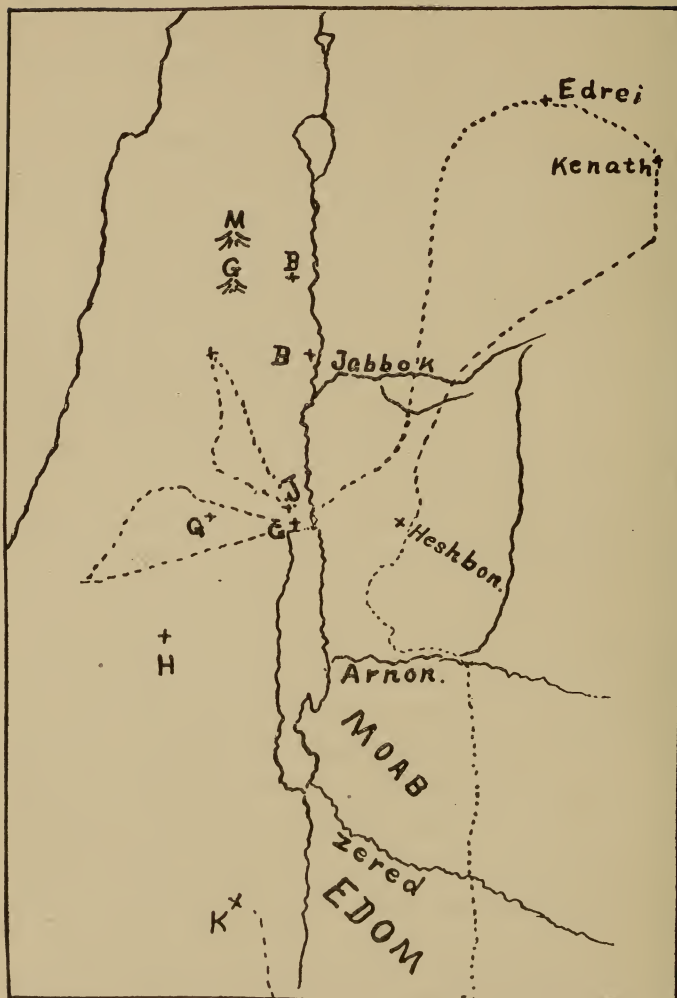
This brought them to the country of King Og, who ruled over sixty walled cities. The walls around these cities were high and strong, and the gates were of iron, but the Israelites had spent forty years in training with God, and they were not afraid, so they pushed on.

Kenath was built on a great island of lava. When the melted rock hardened, it split, leaving deep cracks crossing each other in every direction. In these cracks the streets and houses were built. The houses were of stone, and even the doors were of great, heavy stones. The streets twisted, and turned, and crossed each other in such a way that strangers got lost in them. It seemed as though there was no possibility of this city being captured.

There were in that country a great many hornets; sometimes many swarms of them would settle down over a village and drive the people out of their houses and away from the village. As the Israelite army marched toward Kenath, one of these great swarms of hornets settled down upon

Stories of Bible Victories

MAP VI.



A Succession of Victories

the city. The people fled to the open country. The Israelites at once attacked them, and took their city from them.

Next they marched against the capital of King Og. The hill on which this city was built was hollowed out like a cup, and the city was down in the hollow; all around the hill was a gorge, as though some time God had dug a great ditch to keep every one away from this hill.

Og thought he was safe here, but he did not know that an army with God as leader always wins. He was defeated, and killed. The Israelites carried away as a memorial of this victory the great iron bedstead of King Og. This bed was thirteen feet long and six feet wide.

They had now slain the last of the giant kings.

The other fifty-eight walled cities were taken one by one by this army, with God on its side, and the people now had an open passage way into the Promised Land, besides having all this country for their own.

While encamped before the Jordan, awaiting God's orders to cross, Moses, who all these years had been their leader, was taken from them; but they had learned that, not Moses, but God was really their Commander.

MAP STUDY.

Make a new map of Syria on a little larger scale, tracing the final march to Canaan, and mark-

Stories of Bible Victories

ing the Brook Zered, and the battle grounds at the River Arnon, Heshbon, Kenath, and Edrei.

Mark journeys with blue or red pencils.

REFERENCE.—Bible, Numbers, chapter 21; Deuteronomy, chapter 2. Geikie, Vol. II, page 349.

CHAPTER XI.

VICTORY OUT OF DEFEAT.

THROUGH Joshua, the successor of Moses, God has led the children of Israel across the Jordan and into the Promised Land. But their trials are not over. Canaan is inhabited by tribes that are enemies to Israel, and these must be conquered before the people can dwell in peace.

God has given them a great victory at Jericho, and the army has pitched its camp outside the destroyed city. From here Joshua sent spies north to Ai, and said to them, "Go up and spy out the land." This was a dangerous trip. They must go through a narrow mountain pass. The walls of rock rose high on either side; sometimes the path was so narrow and steep it was hard to keep from slipping and falling into the precipice below. Then, too, there were many caves and openings in the rocks where an enemy or robbers might hide and spring out upon them without any warning.

The men crept along carefully and slowly, and finally came out at the upper end of the pass, where they saw Ai just ahead of them, and Bethel close by, on another hill.

They were such small towns that the spies went back to Joshua and said to him: "Let not all

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the people go up; but let about two or three thousand go, and smite Ai. Make not all the people toil up thither, for they are but few."

Joshua listened to this report, and ordered three thousand men to make ready to take Ai. They went forward, expecting an easy victory, but the men of Ai came out against them and they fled back to Jericho, frightened and without any courage.

When Joshua and the elders of Israel heard of this defeat they were greatly troubled. Ai was such a little city that the people would say, "If Ai can defeat the great army of Israel, we need not be afraid of them," and Joshua feared the Canaanites would rise up and drive the Israelites out of the land.

But he knew where to go for help. He prayed to God, saying: "Alas! O Lord Jehovah, wherefore hast Thou at all brought this people over the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites, to cause us to perish? Would that we had been content and dwelt beyond the Jordan! O, Lord, what shall I say, after that Israel hath turned their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it, and will compass us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt Thou do for Thy great name?"

Jehovah said unto Joshua: "Get thee up; wherefore art thou fallen upon thy face? Israel

Victory Out of Defeat

hath sinned; yea, they have even transgressed My covenant which I commanded them: yea, they have even taken of the devoted thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also; and they have even put it among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel can not stand before their enemies; they turn their backs before their enemies, because they are become accursed: I will not be with you any more, except ye destroy the devoted thing from among you."

Then Joshua remembered that God had said to him, when he was made commander, "Only be strong and very courageous, to observe to do according to all the law; . . . turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest have good success whithersoever thou goest;" and he knew that some one in his army must have sinned, or God would have given them the victory.

God then told him how to find out who it was that had disobeyed, stolen, and deceived. Joshua rose early the next morning and all the Israelites came before him. Following God's directions, he found that Achan, the son of Carmi, of the tribe of Judah had taken for himself plunder of gold and silver, and had hidden it among his own belongings.

Joshua had given strict command that no man was to take anything for himself, and his orders had come from Jehovah.

Something must be done. It was not safe to

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have a traitor in the camp, and besides God could not give success unless His commands were obeyed. Achan must be put to death, and his goods destroyed, before victory was possible.

"And all Israel stoned him with stones . . . And they raised over him a great heap of stones."

Then Jehovah said unto Joshua: "Fear not, neither be thou dismayed; take all the people of war with thee; arise, go up to Ai."

So Joshua arose and called all the men of war unto him. He chose thirty thousand men, the bravest of all in the army, and sent them by night to hide themselves in the mountain caves and gorges behind the city of Ai.

And he commanded them, saying: "Behold, ye shall lie in ambush against the city, behind the city; go not very far from the city, but be ye all ready: and I, and all the people that are with me, will approach unto the city.

"And it shall come to pass, when they come out against us, as at the first, that we will flee before them; and they will come out after us, till we have drawn them away from the city; for they will say, 'They flee before us, as at the first:' so we will flee before them; and ye shall rise up from the ambush and take possession of the city: for Jehovah your God will deliver it unto your hand. And it shall be, when ye have seized upon the city, that ye shall set the city on fire; according to the word of Jehovah shall ye do: see, I have commanded you."

Victory Out of Defeat

So the soldiers went out from the camp in the night, and hid themselves back of the city, as Joshua had commanded them.

Early in the morning Joshua mustered all the army that was left, and went up to Ai. Five thousand men he sent to lie in ambush on the other side of the city, between Bethel and Ai, and that night he, with the rest of the army, marched into the valley before Ai.

When morning came, and the king of Ai saw the army of Israel encamped before the city, he thought, just as Joshua had said he would, that he could drive them back as easily as he had before, for he knew nothing about the ambush.

He called his men of war together, and, not waiting to protect the city, marched out against Israel, not leaving a single man in either Bethel or Ai. The army fled, just as it had before, and the people of Ai followed after the retreating foe.

Then Jehovah said to Joshua, "Stretch out the javelin that is in thy hand toward Ai; for I will give it into thy hand."

Joshua stretched out the javelin; the men in ambush, at this signal, rose quickly, entered the city, and set it on fire.

The army fleeing before the men of Ai, turned suddenly and began to fight. The people of Ai turned back, only to see the city burning and the great army of thirty-five thousand marching toward them.

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Retreat was cut off in either direction, and Jehovah gave the victory to the Israelites, even as He had promised to do, when sin was removed from the camp.

MAP STUDY.

Trace on Map VI the further conquest, according to the dotted lines.

Mark Jericho and Ai.

Look up and mark on relief map the position of Ai.

Study line of march between Jericho and Ai.

REFERENCE.—Bible, Joshua, chapters 7 and 8. Geikie, Vol. II, page 405; Smith's Historical Geography, page 120.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TRIUMPH OF A GREAT FAITH.

THE army of Israel were in camp at Gilgal. The victories at Jericho and Ai had caused a panic among the inhabitants of the land. The Gibeonites, by strategy, had made peace with Israel, and had become their slaves, which gave Gibeon into their hands and gave them command of the passes to the coast. The rapidly increasing strength of the Israelites aroused the fear of the surrounding kings. Taking advantage of the absence of Joshua, the five kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lochish, and Eglon formed a league against Gibeon.

If they could just take Gibeon while Joshua was too far away to help, they could hold the Israelites back, and perhaps keep them from taking the rest of the country.

So it was that, suddenly, without any warning, the men of Gibeon found their city surrounded by a great host of angry warriors, determined to punish them for the alliance they had formed with Joshua.

A messenger was smuggled out of the city and sent in breathless haste to Gilgal, to Joshua.

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"Come quickly," he cried, "and save us; for all the kings of the Amorites are gathered together against us." Joshua proved himself equal to the trust God had given him. There was not a moment to waste; before the sun went down, his plans were laid and orders given. Then came a second message; this time from God: "Fear not, for I have delivered them into thy hands; there shall not a man of them stand before thee."

In the darkness of the night the army marched out from Gilgal. With no light but the stars, they traveled steadily over rocks and through difficult passes. Before daylight they had covered the fifteen miles between Gilgal and Gibeon, and came upon the sleeping army of the five kings. By sunrise the battle was on; all the morning the armies surged back and forth, now one side seeming to gain, now the other.

Early in the afternoon the attack of Israel grew more fierce; their battle-cry of "Jehovah, mighty in battle," rang out again and again.

The Canaanites were unable to resist the fierceness of their charge, and the kings gave the signal for retreat. The army broke into a panic-stricken flight. They ran for ten miles, climbing the steep and dangerous ridge of Beth-horon. From here the land drops suddenly several hundred feet in two miles. The rocks seem to be cut into steps, and down these the disorganized army rushed and tumbled, thinking only of reaching the walled

The Triumph of a Great Faith

cities beyond, and wishing for night to stop the pursuit.

Just at this time a fierce storm broke over the valley. The Israelites, from the summit of the ridge, saw only the heavy cloud below them; but the Canaanites, fleeing down the mountain side, were caught by the fury of the storm.

The mighty roar of the thunder filled them with terror, the dazzling flashes of lightning blinded them so that many fell and were trampled under foot, while the hailstones, some of which were of great size, fell with such force that a great many were killed.

"When Joshua reached the head of the ravine, the descent before him was blocked with the masses of the routed armies." The evening was fast approaching; in an hour or two the sun would go down, and in the darkness the army could slip away. What was to be done?

Suddenly Joshua thought: "The sun and moon belong to God; why should they not do as He says?" No sooner had the thought come than he stopped, and asked God to grant this great request; then, looking toward the sun, he said:

"Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon."

God honored Joshua's great faith, for the Bible says that the sun and the moon stood still until the victory was won.

The one army in wild flight, the other in rapid

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pursuit, rushed downward to the plain. The five kings in despair sought refuge and safety in the cave of Makedah.

Word of their hiding place was at once carried to Joshua, but he could not stop. Calling to a soldier, he said: "Roll a stone before the door of the cave, then on in the pursuit. We will attend to them later;" and on they went, capturing and slaying the retreating enemy. Then Joshua returned to the cave where the five kings were imprisoned, and slew them.

At last the victory was won, and so ended the long day; such a day as never was seen, before or since, when Jehovah fought for Israel.

But Joshua could not stop. This victory over the five kings had opened up the whole country to him. Town after town was taken, until all of the south and central part of Palestine belonged to Israel, and God had fulfilled His promise to deliver the people into the hands of Joshua.

MAP STUDY.

Map VI may be used in indicating the location of the new camp at Gilgal and the position of Gibeon. In locating Gibeon, tell the story of the strategy of the Gibeonites. Trace the route of the hurried march, and describe vividly the retreat.

REFERENCE.—Bible, Joshua, chapter 10. Geikie, Vol. II, page 414. Old Testament Heroes, by Meyer, Joshua, chapter 17.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE VICTORIES OF A LONG LIFE.

A WHOLE year had passed since Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt, and now God had given the command to go up and possess the land. Moses would have been very glad to march right into Canaan, but the people were afraid, so God told him to send some men on ahead, to spy out the country, and bring them word about it.

Moses chose twelve of the most trustworthy men, one from each of the great families or tribes of the Israelites, and said to them: "Go up into Canaan, travel over the country, find out all you can about the water supply, the climate, and the crops. Learn the number of inhabitants, and what kind of people they are; also about their cities, whether they are walled or not, and how strong they are, and bring us back some of the fruit of the land."

This was a great honor, and the people gathered round to see these twelve men start off. They went northward into the hill country of Judea, then still farther north, coming back by the way of Hebron.

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As they came toward Hebron they talked of all the things that had happened here. For it was in Hebron that Abraham had pitched his tent, hundreds of years before.

"I wonder," said one, "if the tree is still standing under which God and the two angels talked and ate with Abraham."

"It may be this very tree which we are now passing," said another.

"That must be the road over which Abraham and Jehovah walked as Abraham pleaded for Sodom," said another.

"Yes, and yonder is the field of Machpelah, where Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah are buried."

Caleb, one of the spies, said very little, but his heart was strangely stirred as he thought of all these things. He felt as though he could almost see Abraham as God talked with him, and somehow God seemed very near, as they stood on the very ground where He had stood.

The spies stopped in Hebron to purchase pomegranates, figs, and grapes, to carry back with them to show the people. Now their journey led them away from this beautiful country, across the barren, rocky mountains of the desert, back to the camp of Israel.

They had been gone about six weeks, and the people were waiting anxiously for their return. Some one spied them in the distance. Word

The Victories of a Long Life

quickly flew through the camp, and immediately from every direction people started out to meet them. They were loaded with the fruits which they had bought. As they came nearer, the people could see that two of them had a pole across their shoulders, carrying something between them.

"What can they be bringing?" every one asked. As they came nearer the interest increased.

"It looks like a sack of something," said one.

"Perhaps they are bringing us some corn," said another. Each had a different idea. At last one exclaimed: "It is a bunch of grapes! Look at its size!"

A bunch of grapes it really was, and so large that it had to be carried in this way. The people were wild with enthusiasm when the spies showed all the fruit which they had brought. It must be a great country which God would give them.

But what is this they are saying? "Fierce giants." "Strong walled cities." "No use to try to fight them."

Only two of the twelve are strong in their faith in Jehovah, and His promise to give them the land, but it is useless for Caleb and Joshua to tell them of this—they will not listen to their report. They will have nothing to do with them.

Caleb tries to remind them of how God led them out of Egypt; of the way He had opened the Red Sea for them; of the victories He had given them.

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"Come," he said, "let us go up at once and possess the land; for we are well able to overcome it."

But the other spies said: "No, we are not able to go up against this people, for they are strong. Why, we saw giants up there, the sons of Anak, and we were like grasshoppers beside them."

Then the people murmured against Moses. Some said: "Come, let us select a leader, and go back to Egypt. We would better be slaves there, than to die here in this wilderness."

Again Caleb and Joshua said: "The land through which we passed is an exceedingly good land. If the Lord delight in us, then He will give us this land."

But they would not listen. Then was God angry with them, and He said: "Because these people have forgotten all that I did for them in the land of Egypt, and have not trusted Me, not one of them, except Caleb and Joshua, shall go up into the land which I promised to Abraham and his children." Caleb was made very happy, for God said that some day, he should have the land through which they had passed for his possession. This meant that Hebron would be his.

For forty years Caleb waited for God to keep this promise. Moving here and there in the desert, he saw first one and then another of his friends die, but he was not afraid. The tribes revolted against Moses again and again, but Caleb

The Victories of a Long Life

was loyal, and all the time he was thinking of Hebron, where God Himself had walked and talked with Abraham.

It was a long, long time to wait, but at last the day came when the children of Israel crossed the Jordan, and came into the land which God had promised to Abraham.

How Caleb wanted to hurry right off to Hebron, his Hebron; but again he must wait. The land must be won from the heathen tribes living there, and all must fight together. Moses was gone; Joshua was now leader of the Israelites: would he remember? Caleb could not tell, but he stood by him through the six years that the army marched back and forth in the land, conquering first one city, then another.

Joshua and Caleb are now old men. The enemy are not all driven out, but the time has come to divide the land. A great meeting is called. As all are waiting for Joshua to assign to each tribe the land that is to be its home, Caleb steps out. See him as he stands there! A soldier, every inch! Strong, straight, and full of courage, though his hair and beard are snowy white. Hear his voice as he speaks. It is the voice of a commander. He reminds Joshua of the time when as spies they visited this land, and that he had "wholly followed the Lord God," even when the other spies brought an evil report.

Then he said: "Moses sware on that day,

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saying, 'Surely the land whereon thy foot hath trodden shall be an inheritance to thee, and to thy children forever, because thou hast wholly followed Jehovah my God.'

"And now," said Caleb, "the Lord has kept me alive these forty-five years. To-day I am eighty-five years old, and yet I am as strong as I was on the day that Moses sent me into this land. Now give to me this land that Moses promised me."

"But, Caleb," some one said, "those great giants, the Anakim, are still there."

"Yes," said another, "and have you forgotten about the strong, walled cities? You are too old to attempt such a conquest. Let some of the younger men take Hebron."

But Caleb said: "The Anakim were there when God promised it to me, and the cities were great and walled; but if the Lord be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out."

Then Joshua blessed Caleb, and gave to him Hebron for his inheritance.

Caleb, with his followers, knowing that God had promised them the victory, was not afraid even of the great giants. He marched against Arba, the greatest man of the Anakim, and took from him his city, the very Hebron where Caleb had stood forty-five years before. But he did not stop here. He wholly drove out the Anakim from all their country, even as God had told him

The Victories of a Long Life

to do. And then, the Bible tells us, the land had rest from war.

MAP STUDY.

Turn back to Map V. Starting north from Kadesh Barnea, pass through Negel or "the South," probably by way of Beersheba and Bethel on north to the region about Lake Merom; back, though not exactly over the same route, stopping at Hebron, and thence to Kadesh Barnea.

REFERENCE.—Bible—Numbers, chapters 13 and 14; Deuteronomy 1, 6; Joshua 14, 6-15; 15, 13-19. Smith's Historical Geography, Chapter 10. Old Testament Heroes, by Meyer—Joshua, chapter 17.

CHAPTER XIV.

A THREEFOLD VICTORY.

IT is a fair summer morning in the land of Israel. The Jordan Valley seems fairly alive, for over the hills and along the highways the people are thronging from every side.

But it is not joy in the beautiful summer day that animates them. It is a great fear that has come upon them—fear not the less great because it is a new one. There is a sort of order, too, in the throng. One, looking closely, could see that the people are pouring away from the traveled highway, and that they bear with them their most treasured possessions.

Another procession is moving up the valley; the great Midianite generals, Zeba and Zalmunna, are leading their immense army up for the annual invasion of Israel. The jewels with which the camels are decked flash in the sunlight as the host moves on; the brilliant scarlet coats of the generals and leaders make the army seem like a great moving flower garden.

On they march, leaving ruin behind them. Here is a green field, just ready to harvest; the

A Threefold Victory

army passes, and the country looks as though it had been swept by an army of grasshoppers—every spear of grain, every green leaf is gone.

Up they go through the narrow pass of Wady El Jalud, into the beautiful valley of Esdraelon; here, surrounded on every side by the mountains, they pitch their tents on the east side of the valley, and begin their work of destruction.

As the army marches toward the valley, the inhabitants flee to the caves and rocks of the mountains. They have seen these soldiers before, and they know what to expect.

For six years, each summer, just as the grain was ripe, this Midianite army had invaded the land, they had trampled down and destroyed the crops, so that there was nothing left for the people or their cattle to eat. The army was so great the people could not stop them.

This year, however, though the people do not know it, all is changed. The young Captain Gideon has been chosen by God to be the leader of Israel. From hilltop to hilltop has sounded his trumpet call; the armies of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali heard the call and have hurried in to battle with him.

General Zeba, looking out from his tent, is amazed to see an army thirty-three thousand strong marching through the mountain pass at the northwest. A message is sent in haste to summon General Zalmunna; Captains Oreb and Zeeb are also

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called, and together the four watch the incoming host.

On marches the army of Israel. They take up their position at the west end of the valley, tents are pitched, and before night this second army has gone into camp.

Gideon's force is far the smaller, but he feels that thirty-three thousand men with God as Commander-in-chief is enough for the battle. But, as the evening comes, Gideon receives a message from his Commander: "It is a custom of your people to allow all who are fearful to return home. Your army is too large. Issue the command that those who are afraid may leave."

Gideon obeys the command, but to his dismay twenty-two thousand men file out of camp, and march off in the darkness. What is to be done now? Eleven thousand men stand no chance whatever against that great army.

In the darkness of the night Gideon fights his battle. Why has God called him to lead this army, and then taken so many of his men away from him? He can not do it. It only means defeat; surely there is a mistake somewhere.

But the order of his Commander-in-chief had been clear, and before daylight Gideon conquers his fear. It is a captain full of courage, who, the next morning, gives command to the army to remain quietly in their camp during the day, that the enemy may not discover their diminished numbers.

A Threefold Victory

The burning sun beats down on the white sands, as the thirsty soldiers lie all day in the camp. If they could just go for a drink, or get into the shade; but the enemy must not know how few they are. Toward evening the order comes to go to the spring nearby for water. In their joy and relief the soldiers forget everything except that they are so thirsty. They rush to the spring, never thinking of the enemy just across the valley. No, not all of them. Some remember that they are soldiers, and that a soldier must not think of himself first. When they reach the spring, instead of dropping onto their knees and dipping their faces into the water as do the others, these dip the water up with their hands; they stand erect and on the alert, ready for a surprise attack, even while they are drinking.

The Commander-in-chief sends sealed orders to Gideon this time: "These men are true soldiers; separate them, and send the rest away."

When the captain counted the army left to him, he had just three hundred men. Silently in the darkness they made their way back to their tents. What did it all mean? They might just as well give up now and go home.

Captain Gideon waited for orders and they soon came, but the Commander said, "Go ahead." Again Gideon wondered if he had not made a mistake, if it could be that he must fight with only three hundred men. He just could n't do it, and

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there was no use of thinking of it; but again he came off victorious. He put fear away and decided to obey orders, for surely his Captain knew what He was about.

Nothing could be done in open battle with such odds against him. Strategy was his only hope.

Very quietly he called his men around him, in the darkness, and told them his plan. The enemy, he said, were disorganized and fearful. If they could be badly frightened, they would become confused and kill each other. He then outlined his plan for the maneuver. The army was divided into three divisions; these were to start off silently in three directions, and by a detour come up so as to surround the Midianite camp. Each man was given a lamp or torch, hidden in a pitcher, and a trumpet. When all were in their places, Gideon was to give the signal; each man would break his pitcher, wave his torch, and shout, "The sword of the Lord and Gideon," then blow his trumpet.

The night was dark, scarcely a star was to be seen; the soldiers marched with greatest care, lest some stone might roll, or some twig crack, and call the attention of the sentinels. Not a word was spoken; not an order given.

At every slightest sound they stopped and listened, but "all was well," and at last the sleeping camp was surrounded.

Gideon gave the signal; instantly the pitchers crashed; into the darkness flashed three hundred

A Threefold Victory

dazzling lights as the torches waved; the shouting and blast of the trumpets filled the night with a din and noise that seemed to come from an army too great to be counted.

The enemy, wakened from their sleep, sprang to their feet. They were surprised, dismayed, panic-stricken; every torch stood to them for a commander, and in the darkness, the camp seemed swarming with the hostile soldiers; each thought every other man was an Israelite and tried to kill him. Then they broke into a run, and started in a wild, riotous mass for the Jordan, but Gideon was too quick for them.

Again the hilltops resounded with the call to arms. Many of those who had left the army in fear had remained near, and when victory was in sight again joined the army of Israel. Recruits came from every direction; hundreds were added at each village through which they passed. The enemy's escape was cut off, and confidence in Captain Gideon was restored. A second battle was fought, and Israel again was the victor. Part of the Midianite army succeeded in making their escape over the ford at Beth-barah, among them the commanders Zeba and Zalmunna.

Gideon, rallying his forces after the second battle, in which Oreb and Zeeb were killed, pursued the fleeing army and overtook them at Karkor, where they were again defeated and the commanders taken prisoners.

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The victory was a great one, and the people felt that no honor was too great for Captain Gideon. They wanted to make him king, but the man who had been too great to be overcome by what seemed to be an impossible command from his Commander-in-chief, was too great to forget that it was really the Great Commander who had given them the victory, and that He was still the best Leader for Israel.

MAP STUDY.

Map VI may be used for this lesson. The route of the Midianites was up the Jordan Valley on the east side of the river, across the Jordan, past Bethshean, into the eastern end of the Esdraelon Valley.

Their tents were pitched from Mt. Gilboa westward to Mt. Moriah.

The stream of testing was probably at the foot of Mt. Gilboa.

The fords where the fleeing Midianites attempted to cross were at Beth-barah.

The home of Gideon was at Ophrah.

REFERENCE.—Bible, Joshua, chapters 6, 7, and 8. Geikie, Vol. II, page 484.

CHAPTER XV.

THE TRIUMPH OF RIGHT.

IT is the eve of a most remarkable battle. The army of King Saul is very small. When war was declared it had numbered three thousand, but, while waiting for directions from God, first one and then another had deserted, until but six hundred are left. But this is not all; not a sword nor a spear is to be found among all the six hundred, except in the hands of Saul and his son Jonathan.

The Philistines had captured all the swords and spears, and not only that, they had taken the places where these were made, so that the Israelites were unable to get more. They were now encamped at Geba, only about an hour's march from where Saul's army lay encamped at Gibeah; but between lay the narrow pass of Michmash, and the only possibility of an attack, by either army, was in a long march around the hills.

As the armies lay, each waiting for the other to make the attack, Jonathan, Saul's favorite son, spoke to his armor-bearer. "Come," said he, "let us two go against these Philistines. I believe God will help us, and He can win with us two just

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as easily as with a great army." And the armor-bearer said, "I will go with you wherever you go."

Then Jonathan said, "When they see us coming, if they call to us to come nearer, we will take it for a message from God that He will help us."

So these brave boys, trusting only in God, and telling no one where they were going, crossed the narrow ford and climbed up the rocky hillside. It was so steep that if they had made a single misstep they would have been hurled down to instant death. Slowly and carefully they climbed, until they reached a point near the top, where they were discovered by the sentinels of the enemy. Not believing it possible that any one could climb up that steep mountain side, the sentinels made fun of them, saying, "The Hebrews are creeping out of the holes where they have been hiding." Then they called to them, "Come up, won't you; we would like to make your acquaintance." And Jonathan knew that these words were God's message of help.

He accepted the challenge, and before the enemy knew what he was doing, he and his armor-bearer had reached the top, and twenty men had fallen before their arrows. With stones and slings they followed the arrows. As the showers of stones continued, the Philistines thought the whole army had followed them up the mountain, and they broke into wild flight.

Saul, seeing this from his post at Gibeah,

The Triumph of Right

started in pursuit. As he went, men came out from their hiding places in the mountain caves and joined him; each city added recruits, until his army increased from six hundred to ten thousand, and the Philistine army was overcome and defeated. Some, however, escaped. Saul pursued them, and would have easily conquered them, had it not been for a foolish and hasty act of his own.

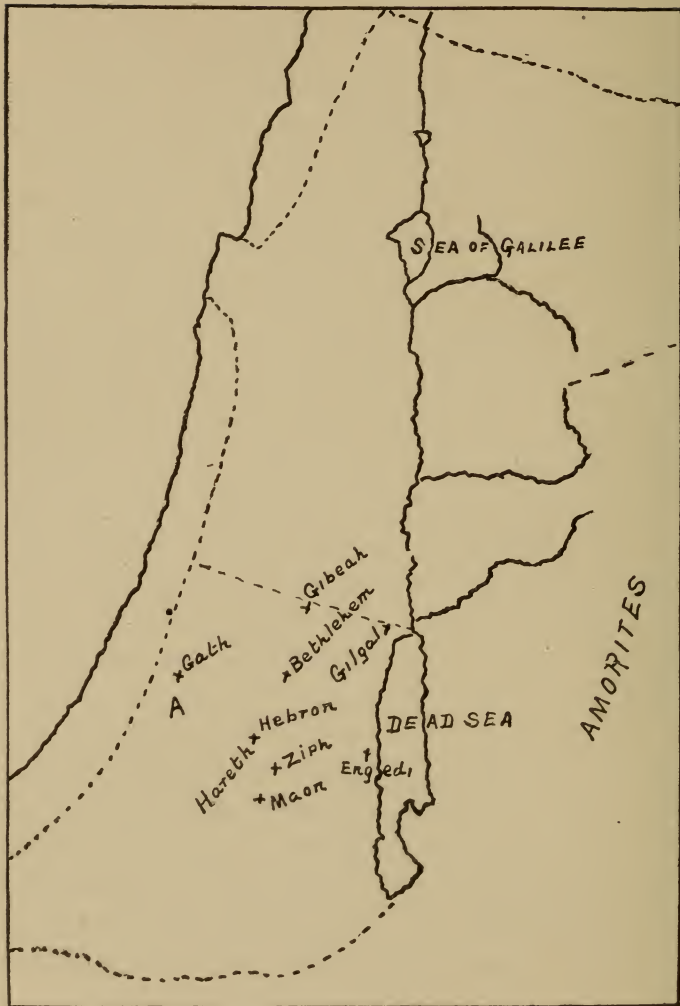
Without stopping to think how tired and hungry his men would get, he had, when they started, commanded that not a mouthful of anything was to be eaten, by any one, till the victory was gained. Jonathan knew nothing of this, and being hungry, dipped the point of his sword in some honey, as they passed a wild bees' nest, and ate this. The soldiers were almost starved, and, thinking that this meant that Saul's command need no longer be obeyed, they began to kill the cattle they had captured from the Philistines, and to eat them.

Saul called a halt, and demanded to know who had disobeyed him. No one would betray Jonathan, but Saul would not give up until he found out. Then he said Jonathan must be killed, because he had sworn that any one who should eat anything should be put to death, even though it were his own son, and for his oath's sake Jonathan must die.

Now came the second battle. This time not even slings were used. It was a battle between

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MAP VII.



The Triumph of Right

right and wrong. King Saul loved Jonathan very much, but he thought a bad promise must be kept. The people, too, loved Jonathan, and they said Saul could not put to death the man, who had really driven the Philistines out of their land, just because he had made a wicked promise.

There is a verse which says, "Right is right, since God is God, and Right the day will win," and so it was this time. Right won the day, and Jonathan's life was saved; but Saul's wicked promise had stopped the pursuit of the Philistines, and some of them escaped and reached their homes, determined some day to come back, and punish the Israelites for the great victory they had won that day.

MAP STUDY.

Draw Map No. VII, indicating more perfectly the western boundary of Palestine.

Locate Gilgal, the camp from which Saul moved.

Gibeah, the camp of Jonathan; the pass of Michmash, just north of Gibeah, with Geba, the camp of the enemy, on the opposite side of the pass.

REFERENCE.—Bible, I Samuel, chapters 13 and 14. Geikie, Vol. II, page 102.

CHAPTER XVI.

A GIANT VICTORY.

THE army of Israel is encamped on the hill-side. Below them is a deep ravine; on the other side, the tents of the Philistines fill the valley, and extend far up the mountain side.

Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday pass, but there is no battle; a week passes, then another, and another, until nearly six weeks have gone. Each morning the soldiers awake, thinking that before night the order to advance on the enemy will come. Each morning the great giant, Goliath, comes out from the Philistine camp. He strides down the hill, across the stream, and up in front of the camp of Israel. Here he marches back and forth, calling to them: "Send out a man to fight me! If he wins, we will be your slaves; but if I conquer, you shall be our slaves."

Not a man dares attack him. Look at him! Who wonders that there is no one brave enough to fight him! As he marches up and down, the Israelite soldiers feel like dwarfs. They must look far up to see the top of his helmet, for he is almost eight feet tall. His coat of mail, made of shining brass, quite dazzles their eyes, as he walks back and forth in the sun. Think of its weight; one

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hundred and fifty-seven pounds, and yet it does not burden him! Then, what could their spears do against that great one of his, which weighs nineteen pounds? One blow from it would break them into a hundred pieces.

As the soldiers look at him, each one wishes that he might be the one to kill him, but they dare not try.

Every day, for forty days, that giant has tramped up and down, up and down, in front of Israel's camp. Each day he makes fun of them, and of their God. He calls them cowards, and slaves, and says he will defy the army of Israel, which to him means God's army. Every morning as the soldiers of King Saul look out of their tents, they hope something has happened to Goliath, and that he will not come again, but before long they see him leave his tent and start down the hill. Each time he seems larger and more terrible than the day before.

Over beyond the mountains, in the city of Bethlehem, lives a man whose name is Jesse. Three of his eight sons are in Saul's army, but the youngest is out on the hills taking care of his father's sheep.

As the days go by and no word comes from the seat of war, Jesse sends David, his youngest son, to find out how his brothers are faring, and to take them some food from home.

David, like any other boy, has been thinking

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about the army, and probably wishing that he was old enough to be a soldier. He can hardly wait for his father to finish his message, so eager is he to be off. He thinks, perhaps, the battle has already begun, and he runs that he may be there in time to see it. It seems as though he can not go fast enough. His load is heavy, but he can not stop to rest. At last he rounds the hill, and comes in full sight of the army drawn up in battle line. As he runs, he shouts for the army of Israel. But why does not the battle begin? On he hurries, till he reaches his brothers. He forgets that he has not seen them for a long time, and only asks why Israel is not fighting.

Just then, out marches Goliath. The soldiers flee back to their tents. David listens to his challenge; then, as he hears his taunts, he turns to the soldiers nearest him, but before he can ask a question, the soldiers call out: "See this giant man? He comes out every day and defies us. The king has offered a great reward to the man who will kill him, but every one is afraid."

"But," cries David, "is there not one brave enough to fight him? Will you let a heathen challenge God's army?"

David's brothers try to stop him, but he goes from one soldier to another, asking the same questions. He is so much in earnest, that the soldiers see that he has made up his mind to fight the giant.

A Giant Victory

They take the message to King Saul, who sends for David. When Saul sees that he is so young—only a boy—he tries to show him how foolish it is for him to think that he can fight such a giant. But this is David's answer:

"I have killed both a bear and a lion that tried to get my father's sheep. 'And the Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.' "

Then Saul orders his own armor put on him, and gives to him his sword. David starts out; but he has never worn armor before, and it is too heavy for him. He goes back to take it off, and Goliath, thinking that, as usual, there is no one who dares to fight him, turns toward his tent, shouting back and calling the men of Israel cowards and slaves. David runs from the tent of Saul, and as he crosses the brook after Goliath, picks up five smooth stones and drops them into his bag. His sling, which never misses the mark, is in his hand. As Goliath reaches the hillside, he may have heard a triumphant shout from Israel, for he turns back, and there he sees a boy, with neither armor nor sword, challenging him.

He is so angry he fairly roars, as he calls out: "Am I a dog, that you come out to fight me this way? Come on, and I will give your body to the fowls of the air and to the beasts of the field."

But David answers: "You come to fight me

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with a sword and spear, but I come in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, and this day I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. The battle is the Lord's, and He will give it into our hands."

The reply angers the giant still more. He starts toward David. One blow from his mighty sword and that bragging boy will have nothing more to say. But it is such an easy victory; it is really beneath a giant to fight with such a boy. However, he will teach him a lesson.

David has not practiced with his sling all these years for nothing. He takes a stone from his pocket, fits it in his sling, and before Goliath realizes what he is doing, the stone sinks into the forehead of the giant, and he falls to the ground.

Both armies stand watching, scarcely breathing, so strange is this combat. As Goliath falls, not a sound is heard. David now runs forward and leaps upon the giant. Drawing his great sword out of its sheath, he smites the mighty Philistine and cuts off his head. A shout goes up from the camp of Israel, while the army of the Philistines seems almost to melt out of sight.

The trumpeters of Saul sound the battle-cry; the army starts across the ravine at a double-quick; the Philistines flee before them, and are driven out of the land.

A Giant Victory

Not a soldier on either side but has learned this day that even a boy can uphold God's honor, and that with God to help him, there is no giant strong enough or great enough to overcome him.

MAP STUDY.

Use Map VII for this lesson.

Locate Bethlehem, and study its situation; the hills about the city, the wild flowers which David would have picked, the wild animals which endangered his flock, and which imply the presence of rocks and caves; also Gath.

How must David have gone to get to the Valley of Elah, which lies just south of the city of Gath, the home of Goliath?

REFERENCE.—Bible, 1 Samuel, chapter 17, Geikie, Vol. III, pages 126, 135.

CHAPTER XVII.

A VICTORY OF LOYALTY.

AFTER Goliath was dead, and the Philistines driven out of the land, King Saul sent for the young man who had had the courage to fight the giant, and took him into his own palace to live. Here David first saw Jonathan, the king's son, then a lad of more than his own age. When Jonathan saw him he loved him, and took off his own outer coat and put it on him in token of his love, giving him also his sword, his bow, and his girdle.

Saul, too, loved David at first, and kept him near him much of the time. But when the people praised David more than they did Saul, in their joy over the death of the giant, Saul's love was turned into jealousy, and he planned to get rid of him. But all the people were praising him, and there was no opportunity. Day after day his anger grew, and at last he determined to slay David. One day, as David was playing on his harp and making music for the king, he threw his spear at him, and would have killed him, had not David dodged, so that the spear went into the wall.

A Victory of Loyalty

Saul next sent David out single-handed to slay one hundred Philistines, in return for which he promised to give him his daughter, as his wife; he really sent him because he did not believe that David could do it, but thought that the Philistines would kill him. But God was with David. He was victorious over the Philistines, and the king was compelled to keep his promise.

Finally David found that it was not safe for him to live near Saul any longer, so he left his wife and his dearest friend, Jonathan, and went out into the mountains. Here an army of the strongest men in the kingdom came to him. They lived in caves, and moved from place to place, as Saul learned where they were, and followed them. At one time Saul's army almost took David, but a messenger came to the king, telling him that the Philistines were coming up into his country, and he had to hurry away to drive them out.

As soon as the Philistines were gone, Saul came back to the wilderness, determined to find David and kill him. One day he crept into a cave, and lay down to rest. It happened that David and some of his men were hiding in this very cave. They kept very still, so that Saul did not see them, and he soon lay down and went to sleep. Then David's men said to him: "Now is your opportunity. Saul has tried for years to kill you, but to-day God has put him into your hands. You can do anything you wish with him."

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As David stood there, looking at the king, he must have thought of that day the spear whizzed so close to him that he could almost feel it, and of the dangers all around him while he was killing those hundred Philistines; but most of all, he must have thought how Saul had given his wife to another man, while he was hiding in the wilderness, and of his beloved friend Jonathan, from whom he had been separated all these years.

Surely this was his chance. He could kill Saul so easily, and then he would be king. For had not Samuel told him that God had chosen him to be king after Saul?

David stood so long in thought that his men grew impatient. "If David does not strike him, Saul will wake up; and then, how quickly he will kill David," thought the men. David moved a step nearer, and took out his sword. Yes, it surely would be a good thing to kill such a wicked king. But see what he has done! He stooped over and cut off the robe or cloak of Saul; then he stood up and moved away. His men would have liked to kill Saul then, but David would not let them. He told them he was sorry he had even cut off his cloak, because, after all, God had made Saul their king.

When the king awoke, no one was in sight; but after he left the cave, David followed him, and cried after him, saying:

A Victory of Loyalty

"My lord and king." When Saul saw who it was, David said:

"Wherefore hearkenest thou to men's words, saying, 'Behold, David seeketh thy hurt?' Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that Jehovah had delivered thee to-day into mine hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee; but mine eye spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is Jehovah's anointed."

When David finished, Saul said:

"Is this thy voice, my son David?" and he wept. Then he said to David:

"Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rendered unto me good, whereas I have rendered unto thee evil. And thou hast declared this day how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as when Jehovah had delivered me up into thine hand, thou killedst me not."

Then Saul went back to his palace; but David lived in the mountains. And there was peace for a long time between Saul and David.

MAP STUDY.

Map VII is used in this lesson.

David, a fugitive in the wilderness, is obliged to flee from one mountain fastness to another.

Going first to Adullam, he afterward flees across the Jordan, into the country of the Am-

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morites. Returning to his own country, he hides first in Hareth, then Ziph, then Maor; next in the cliffs of Engedi, where he spares the king's life, and finally in the hills about Hebron.

• REFERENCE.—Bible, 1 Samuel, chapters 21 to 26. Geikie, Vol. III, page 152.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE DEFEAT OF THE PROPHETS OF BAAL.

WHERE are all of these people going? It must be some great event that sends them by scores and by hundreds toiling along the dusty roads, and through the dry fields! The hot sun beats down with a merciless glare; not a flower or a fern is to be seen, and even the leaves of the trees are bare and brown. But there is something worse than that; the streams are dried up so that there is no water to slake their thirst. No cattle are in the fields, for their owners have long since driven them into other countries, to find water for them.

As the people come nearer, we can see that this is a strange gathering. Here are all the priests of Baal, the god of the heathen people, in their gorgeous robes of office; here are members of the king's own household; here great throngs of the common people, while in the midst, the people parting before him, passes the king himself—the mighty Ahab.

As they draw near the mountain, the king strains his eyes toward the summit. Yes, there stands, alone and unafraid, the prophet Elijah, who, three years before, had dared to tell King

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Ahab, that because of his sins, there should no rain fall in his kingdom until God should tell Elijah to call it down; and from that day, not one drop had fallen. Yet he faces the multitudes, headed by an angry king, and is not afraid; for this day he is to show these priests and their ruler that it is Jehovah, the one true and only God, who has done this thing.

As the people reach the mountain top, Elijah turns to them. Yes, there is the king, and yonder are the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and four hundred of the prophets of the grove, for whom he sent, and the many people who have followed to see what was going on.

Elijah tells them that he has called them up into the mountain, to prove to them which is the true God, Baal or Jehovah.

He says to them: "There are four hundred and fifty of them who worship Baal, but I am the only one who worships Jehovah. Let the followers of Baal choose two bullocks for us. Let them take one and cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood for an offering, but put no fire under it. I will dress the other bullock and lay it on the wood, and put no fire under it.

"Then let the prophets of Baal call upon Baal, and I will call on the name of the Lord, and the god that answers by fire, let him be God."

Now, said Elijah to the prophets of Baal, "You choose your bullock and dress it first, for there are so many of you."

The Defeat of the Prophets of Baal

These prophets selected a bullock, and Elijah and all the people watched them as they dressed it. Then they placed the bullock on the wood, but put no fire under it. All was now ready. They prayed to Baal, and called upon him to send fire. From morning till noon they prayed. At noon Elijah said to them, "Cry louder; perhaps your god is asleep, or maybe he is on a journey and does not hear you."

Then they cried with greater voice, and leaped, and danced, and tried in every way to make Baal hear and answer them; but evening came, and the bullock still lay on the wood and no fire had come near it.

Then Elijah said to the people, "Come near to me," and all the people gathered round him. He repaired the altar of God which was on the top of the mountain; then he took twelve stones and built upon this altar, and digged a trench all around it. Next he arranged the wood on the altar, cut the bullock in pieces and laid the pieces on the wood.

"Now," he said to the people, "fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the wood and the sacrifice."

They did so, and he said, "Do it again," and they filled them again, and poured the water over the altar. Then said Elijah, "Do it the third time." This time the water ran down and filled the trench about the altar! When the hour for the evening

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sacrifice came, Elijah prayed, and said: "Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and that I have done these things according to Thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that Thou art the Lord God."

Then God sent His fire. It burned up the sacrifice, the wood and the stones of the altar, and licked up the water in the trench.

When the people saw this, they fell on their faces and said, "The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!"

"Then," said Elijah, "we must destroy these prophets of Baal." After the prophets of Baal had been put to death, Elijah said to the king: "Get thee up, eat and drink, for there is the sound of an abundance of rain."

And, as at the word of God's prophet the heavens were closed, so at his word were they were opened. The rain fell; the fields and growing things were revived, and the brooks ran full again. So was the word of God victorious on Mount Carmel!

MAP STUDY.

Use outline as in Map No. VII, marking the boundary between Judah and Israel, as indicated by dotted lines.

The Defeat of the Prophets of Baal

Add the mountains, as have been indicated in the making of relief map, locating Ebal, Gerizim, and Mt. Carmel.

Study the appearance of Mt. Carmel, and the outlook from it, on one side the sea, and on the other the plain of Esdraelon.

Picture the bold, precipitous sides of the mountains as indicated by the Bible narrative; also the table-like summit with its deep spring of water, which even the three years of drought had not dried up.

REFERENCE.—I Kings, chapter 18. Geikie, Vol. IV, page 67.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CONQUEST OF PRIDE.

THE Israelites and Syrians were next door neighbors, but they were not very good friends, for they were constantly quarreling. As Syria was the larger nation, she always wanted to fight, and whenever there was any trouble, sent an army into Israel to capture some of the cities.

But Syria had troubles of her own. Israel and Assyria had both made war against her, and her army was destroyed. Still she would not let Israel alone.

Small companies of Syrians crossed the border line, stealing everything they could lay their hands on, and carrying off as many prisoners as they could capture.

In Benhadad's army was a great captain. He was very brave, and had been the leader in many of the Syrian victories. He led one of these plundering expeditions into Israel, and among the prisoners which he took was a girl, who became a maid to his wife. Very soon this maid found out that, though Naaman was so brave and such a great general, he was a leper. The little Israelite girl thought this was about the worst thing that

The Conquest of Pride

could happen to a man. She was so sorry for him that she forgot that he had stolen her, and made her a slave.

Back in her own country were many lepers, and she knew that no doctor could help them. But there in her old home dwelt a man, one of the prophets, of whom her people told wonderful things, among them, that he could heal this terrible disease. The more she thought of it, the more she felt certain that if her master could only see this prophet, he might yet be healed. At last she could stand it no longer—she must speak; and she burst forth to her mistress: “Would that my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria, for he could heal him of his leprosy.”

So great was her faith that she told it again and again, and at last one of the servants told his master what the little girl had said.

Even a little hope was not to be left untried, so when Captain Naaman heard of this, he went to King Benhadad, and asked if he might go and see this prophet. The king said, “Go, take with you many gifts; and I will also give you a letter to take to the king of Israel.”

When Naaman was ready to start, he had quite a procession, with his chariot, his servants, and the men to carry the gifts. He went first to the king of Israel, and gave to him King Benhadad's letter. The king read the letter and was very angry, and also afraid. What did Benhadad mean by asking

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him to cure a man of the leprosy? Was he trying to pick another quarrel with him?

When Elisha heard of this, he said: "Why is the king disturbed? Let him send the man to me." So the king sent Naaman to Elisha.

It was an imposing array of chariots, horses, and servants that drew up in front of Elisha's house. The captain was accustomed at home to have all the people wait upon him, and run to do his bidding, and to come out to greet him. He thought he was really giving to Elisha a great honor, by coming to his house instead of sending for him to come to him. Surely Elisha knew what a great man he was.

But Elisha did not come out; he sent Gehazi, his servant, to inquire what Naaman wanted. Naaman was angry to be treated in this way, but perhaps Elisha did not know whence he came, and how great and powerful he was. He would bear with him. Elisha would surely come, when he knew that he was to have the honor of healing the great captain of Syria. He even had planned in his own mind just how it should be done, so he told Gehazi his errand.

But Elisha did not want to see the man who had fought against Israel, and carried her people away to be slaves. Again he sent Gehazi back with this message: "Go," he said, "wash in the River Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come unto thee, and thou shalt be clean."

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Then was the proud Naaman very angry. The very idea of Elisha telling *him* to go and wash in that muddy river! "I will never do it!" he cried. "I thought he would surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of Jehovah, his God, and wave his hand over the place, and so heal me. Have we not in our own country far better rivers than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage.

He gave orders to start back to his own country, but his servants could not bear to have him lose this chance of being made well, and one of them said to him: "If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? Why, then, do you not do it when he just tells you to wash and be clean?"

This sounded like good reasoning, but it was such a little thing for a great captain to do.

At last his good sense conquered his pride, and he went to the River Jordan, while his servants stood anxiously upon the banks, watching and hoping.

Again and again, and yet again did he go down into the little river; again and again was he tempted to refuse to go in, as each time he saw no change. But at last he did just as the prophet had told him, and as he came up out of the water, he was entirely cured. He entered his chariot and went

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back to the house of Elisha. He forgot all about being the great Naaman.

This time he did not wait for Elisha to come to him, but went to Elisha, and as he stood before him, he said: "Now I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel."

He offered gifts to Elisha, but Elisha refused to accept them. Then Naaman asked that Elisha would give to his servants two mules' burdens of earth, that he might erect an altar to the God of Israel when he returned to his own country, for he said, "Thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offerings nor sacrifices unto any other gods, but unto the Lord."

Elisha granted this request, and said unto him, "Go in peace;" and he went back to his own land, a well man.

MAP STUDY.

Turn back to Map II, and locate Damascus, in Syria, the home of Naaman; then, turning to Map III, locate Shechem, the home of the king of Israel. Gilgal, the home of Elisha, and the Jordan River.

REFERENCE.—Bible, 2 Kings, chapter 5. Geikie, Vol. IV, page 126.

CHAPTER XX.

A TRIUMPH OVER FEAR.

THE great Assyrian army, under Sennacherib, has swept across the land of Judah. Sixty cities have been taken, and night after night, from the watch-tower of Jerusalem, the watchmen have seen the flames leaping from the ruined towns. The people, watching the reflection of the fire in the sky, have gone to bed each night afraid to sleep lest the army be nearer than they think.

On they come, but King Hezekiah is ready for them. Day and night the men have been at work. Every weak spot in the city wall has been made strong. New watch-towers have been built, so that close watch may be kept on the army. But the greatest danger in a siege is, that the food and water will give out. Just outside the city is the reservoir that supplies the people with water, and the first thing Sennacherib will do, will be to cut off this water supply. Hezekiah knows this, and down deep under ground, where they can not be seen, he has had new channels dug, bringing the water into the city from the bottom of the reservoir.

The light of the fires comes closer, and closer,

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each night. The first thing in the morning every one runs to the housetop to see if the army is in sight. At last the morning comes, when, off to the north of the city, they see what they have been fearing. Their faces turn white, for there, quite close to the walls, are the archers, with their quivers of shining arrows; beyond are the chariots, and rank after rank of shields; while about the gates are the mounted cavalrymen.

All day the people within the city watch that great army. They forget their work; they forget even to eat, and think only of that dull red color which they have seen in the sky so many nights. Will their homes be burned to-night, or will God stay this great army before them?

Some time before this, King Hezekiah had made a mistake. He had thought that by paying a great deal of money, he could save Jerusalem. He had even taken the gold from the temple, in order to have more money. Sennacherib took the money, but he thought that Hezekiah must be afraid of him, or he would not give him so much, so he marched right on toward Jerusalem. Reaching the city, he placed his army so as to shut the gates and keep the people inside of the walls, and sent messengers to Hezekiah, commanding him to surrender.

Hezekiah sent his lieutenants out to meet the men of Sennacherib; but, instead of giving the message to them quietly, in their own Syrian lan-

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guage, the wily Assyrians shouted it out in the language of the Jews, so that all the people on the housetops could hear, hoping to frighten them.

"Hearken not to Hezekiah," they cried, "for he is deceiving you when he says that your God can save you. Look about you everywhere. Where are the gods of all the nations? For they trusted in them, even as you trust in your God; and as these other gods could not save their people, neither shall your God save you. This great king sends this word to you: 'Come now, and make an agreement with me, and seal it by giving me a present, and you shall live in your own homes and have plenty to eat and drink.'"

The people were very, very brave, for they were true to Hezekiah, and instead of answering the Assyrian messengers, they kept perfectly quiet and waited to hear what their king would say. But the messengers who had gone out to meet the ambassadors of Sennacherib were frightened, and came to the king in great distress, with the word of the Assyrians. Close behind them came other messengers, bearing a letter from Sennacherib, repeating his threats and his boasting, that the God of Israel was powerless to save the city.

Hezekiah said, "Only God can save us now;" and he went to the temple, covered himself with sackcloth, as the custom was, and threw himself upon his face in prayer, before the Lord.

"O God of Israel," he cried, "show these

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wicked people that all these other gods are but wood and stone, made by the hand of man; that Thou only art the true God who made the heavens and the earth. Save Thy people, I pray, and let all the world know that Thou alone art God."

Even as he prayed, God spoke to him through the prophet Isaiah, saying: "I have heard thee. Tell the king of Assyria that he has defied the living God. His errand shall fail utterly, and his army shall be cut down. For I will defend this city to save it, for Mine own sake, and for My servant David's sake."

That night the angel of the Lord came down upon the camp of the Assyrians. We do not know just what happened, but this wicked army that had defied the living God was terribly smitten. In the morning, when the Israelites returned to their watch on the city wall, only Sennacherib and a very few of his men were left alive, and these hastened away to their own country.

The people in Jerusalem were O! so glad that they had been true to their God and their king; for their homes were saved—their city not burned. Jehovah had taken care of His people.

MAP STUDY.

Turn back to Plan II, mark outline of Assyria, and complete name.

Trace journey of Sennacherib's army, north along the Tigris, west through Mesopotamia, south

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to Damascus, and into Palestine by way of Lebanon.

Imagine his great array of chariots, horsemen, and archers, climbing the hills and over the rocks, digging wells where water was scarce, and building bridges over the mountain torrents, and roads through the swampy wadys.

Passing southward, Gaza was captured; next Samaria was taken, and the march continued into Judah; the walled cities were taken, and the army laid siege to Jerusalem.

REFERENCE.—Bible, 2 Kings, chapters 18 and 19. Geikie, Vol. IV, page 434.

CHAPTER XXI.

A BOY'S VICTORY.

A GREAT city in the Old Testament days would look strange to one now. Try to imagine an immense wall ten miles long on each side, with two hundred and fifty watch-towers built up from it; on each of the four sides, twenty-five gates of iron. Running through the city a river, crossed by bridges and ferry boats; and within the walls the most beautiful buildings, shining in the sun with the colors of the rainbow. What was the name of this city? Babylon, the largest city in the world at that time.

Out of this city marched the great army of Nebuchadnezzar, across the country, over mountains and plains they marched, day after day, till they came to the city of Jerusalem.

When they left Jerusalem again, besides the soldiers, there were a number of boys, the strongest and finest looking of all the Jewish boys.

These boys were prisoners, and were being carried away from father, mother, and home. It was a long, hard march, but still it was a great one to these boys, who had never been far from Jerusalem. Each day brought new and wonderful scenes,

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but the most marvelous of all was the day when they came in sight of that great wall, with its two hundred and fifty watch-towers. Inside they could see the tall buildings enameled in blue, red, and gold. It was a great sight!

On, the army marched, through one of the iron gates, and up through the streets of the city.

The company in which were the boys, marched not to the prison, or the slave market, but straight to the palace, where the boys learned that they were to live, and to be educated by King Nebuchadnezzar, for his service.

As the boys wandered about the palace it seemed like a city in itself, and such a beautiful one! Everywhere were fine pictures, engravings, and beautiful flowers.

Babylon was in a level country, but outside the windows of the palace the boys saw hills, rising, one above another, covered with grass, flowers, and great trees. Later they learned that these were artificial hills, built by Nebuchadnezzar for one of his queens, whose home had been in a hilly country.

The boys were dressed in the uniform of the king's cadets, and, that they might forget all about their homes and their God, their names were changed to heathen names. Daniel was named Belteshazzar, after the heathen god Bel. The names of his three friends were changed also.

One other thing the boys soon found out. They were divided into companies, and each com-

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pany was put under the care of a man called a melzar, or caretaker, who watched them all the time, while they were in the king's training school. In this school they not only wore the cadet uniform and studied as the king had ordered, but their food was also ordered by the king. The boys rather enjoyed the fine uniforms, and were willing to study hard, but when it came to the food, Daniel and his three friends could not eat. They were Jewish boys, even in their Babylonian clothes and with their heathen names, and their Jehovah had forbidden the drinking of wine or the eating of certain things that the king ordered for them.

What was to be done? "Why, eat it, of course, if the king ordered it," some of the boys said. Not so Daniel; he knew the king could kill him if he wished, but that made no difference to him. He would not eat what was wrong. He went to the chief melzar and told him how he felt about it, asking that he and his friends might eat just vegetables and drink water. The melzar was very fond of Daniel, and would have liked to grant his request, but he did not dare disobey the king's orders.

He said to Daniel: "I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse looking than the youths who are of your own age? So would ye endanger my head."

Did Daniel give up? Not a bit of it. He knew what was right, and he stood by it. He

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next went to his own melzar, and made this proposition: "Try us for ten days; give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. At the end of the ten days, examine us, and if we do not look as well and as strong as the other boys, we will eat just what you give us."

This seemed fair, and the melzar agreed. The other boys had their rich foods and sparkling wines, and perhaps the melzar thought that as Daniel and his friends saw these tempting dishes at every meal, they would be ready at the end of the ten days to yield to the temptation to eat them, and cause no more trouble.

But he did not know how strong a boy can be when he knows he is in the right. When the ten days were ended, he found that Daniel and his friends were stronger, and fairer than any of the other boys.

After that he made no more objection, and for the three years that the boys were in the training school, they ate only the food that they had been taught in their own homes to eat. At the end of that time all the cadets were brought before the king and examined, and among them all there were none that stood so high as Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

MAP STUDY.

Mark the outline and complete the name of Chaldea on Map. II.

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Locate Babylon. Trace journey from Jerusalem to Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar, called home by the death of his father, took the short route across the desert, but the army, with the prisoners, probably took a northern route around the desert, going north possibly on the east side of the Jordan, east into Mesopotamia, and then south on the west side of the Euphrates, through the wonderfully fertile valley, possibly through the Garden of Eden, to Babylon.

REFERENCE.—Bible, Daniel, chapter 1. Geikie, Vol. VI, page 259.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE TRIUMPH OF FAITHFULNESS.

THE boy who had dared to stand for what he knew was right, even when it meant the disobeying of the king's orders, was now an old man nearly ninety years old.

Darius, the new king, knew the kind of a man Daniel was, for he appointed him the ruler over all the princes in his kingdom. The men of Babylon, who were rulers under Daniel, were very jealous of him. They said, "He is only a Jew, and really is a slave, and why should he be made ruler over us?"

So one said, "Let us watch him, and the first time he makes a mistake, we will go to the king and tell him of it."

But Daniel was so true, that he did not do one thing with which they could find fault.

They finally gave this up, and said, "We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God."

After a long talk and much planning, they felt sure that at last they would be able to overthrow Daniel, and at the same time make the king think that they were very devoted to him.

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Together they went to the king. As they came before him, they bowed low, saying: "King Darius, live forever. All the presidents and officers of your kingdom would like to pay you a great honor. We have thought of many plans, but believe we have found one that will please you. We wish to establish a royal law that whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. To make this decree strong, O king, sign the writing and seal it according to the law of the Medes and Persians, that it may not be altered."

King Darius was much flattered, and signed the decree, not stopping to think of all that it might mean. The men went out from the presence of the king, knowing that they would succeed this time; for they knew that Daniel was a man who was afraid of nothing, and who could not be frightened out of doing what he believed was right.

The decree went forth. No one was to pray to any god, but the king, for thirty days.

How closely the men watched Daniel! Evening came; he went to his home. He always kept his window toward Jerusalem open. To-night he did not close it, but knelt before it, just as he had done every night since he had been in Babylon. The men said nothing, but again they watched, and in the morning Daniel knelt and prayed to Jehovah the God of Israel. Noon came, and as his custom

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was, Daniel went to his house and prayed to his God.

The men waited no longer. They hurried away to the king. As they came near, they said to him: "Hast thou not signed a decree that every man that shall make a petition unto any god or man within thirty days, save unto thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?"

The king answered, "The thing is true according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which can not be changed."

Then they said, "That Daniel, who is one of the captives of Judah, has no respect for you, O king, nor pays any attention to the decree which you have signed, but prays three times a day to his God."

When they said this, King Darius knew that these men had made this plot to kill Daniel. He was very much displeased, and tried all the afternoon to find some way to save Daniel. He would have taken back the foolish decree, but the men reminded him that according to the laws of their country he could not change it, after he had put his seal on it.

When night came he commanded that Daniel be brought, and cast into the den of lions. Darius could not save him, even though Daniel had been so faithful to him; but somehow he felt that such a man as Daniel must in some way be saved. As Daniel was brought before him, he said to him,

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"Thy God whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee."

Daniel did not know what God would do, but he was not afraid. He knew he could trust his God.

After he was let down into the lions' den, a stone was put over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his seal, so that no one could take it away. The king went to his palace, but he was very unhappy; he could not eat and he could not sleep. It was such a long night as he sat and thought about Daniel, the truest and bravest man in his kingdom, in the den with all those fierce lions.

Early in the morning he went out to the lions' den. He was afraid to go, but he could n't wait. He had never heard of any one staying all night in a lions' den, and being alive, but it seemed to him as though Daniel's God surely would in some way take care of him.

When he reached the den, he was afraid to call lest there should be no answer. Finally, in a voice so sad that it sounded very strange, he said, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?"

Almost before he finished speaking, the voice of Daniel came back, saying: "O king, live forever. My God has sent His angels, and hath shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me, for-

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as much as before Him I was found innocent, and also before thee, O king, I have done no hurt."

Then the king was exceedingly glad, and commanded that Daniel should be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken out of the den of lions, and he was not hurt in any way because he had not been afraid, but had trusted God.

King Darius commanded that the wicked men, who had tried in this way to kill Daniel, should be thrown into the lions' den. He then issued a new decree, that every one in his kingdom should fear the God of Daniel.

MAP STUDY.

Visit Babylon. See how many places of interest can be found.

REFERENCE.—Bible, Daniel, chapter 6. Geikie, Vol VI, pages 278, 399.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE SECRET OF ALL VICTORY.

THE great Cyrus was now king of Persia. For seventy years the Jews had been captives in that land. Some of them were still slaves; some were officers in the king's court, and others had grown very rich, but they had not forgotten Jehovah, and they often longed to go back to Jerusalem.

The prophet had said that Cyrus was the man whom God had appointed to set His people free. Perhaps Cyrus had heard how the God of the Jews had closed the mouths of the lions, when Daniel, His faithful servant, had been thrown into their den; for in the very year when God had said that the Jews should return to Jerusalem, messengers were sent far and near, all over the kingdom, with the glad tidings, that, according to a decree of King Cyrus, all the Jews were free, and that he would help them in rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem.

Immediately a company was made up to go back and begin the work. Those who did not go gave silver and gold for the work, and Cyrus gave to them the golden vessels that Nebuchadnezzar

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had carried away from the temple, so many years before.

At last all was ready. It was a vast company that gathered together for the journey. When the caravan started there were about fifty thousand people—men, women, and children over twelve years old.

Look at the great procession. Yonder is Zerubbabel, the leader, and near him the musicians, with tabrets and flutes. A thousand mounted cavalry men are waiting to guard them as they cross the desert. Next come seven hundred and thirty-six horses, upon which ride the wealthier people in the company. See how they step in time to the music!

Back of them are four hundred and twenty stately camels stepping along in a dignified way, and on their backs are the aged people, and the children. Six thousand, two hundred and seventy asses carried the baggage, tents, and provisions; then came the long procession, the rest of the fifty thousand people, on foot.

It was a long, long march. They started early in the morning, sometimes before the sun was up, and traveled till it grew so warm that they were obliged to stop and rest; then on again till dark. At night they camped; there were tents for those who were not strong, but the most of the company wrapped their coats about them, and slept out-of-doors under the stars.

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They traveled northward on the west side of the Euphrates River, then westward toward Jerusalem. For four months they traveled, but at last the Jordan River was reached. Then they traveled faster. They could hardly wait for the long, hard journey to end.

At last, one morning, some one called: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem; I can see the hills of Jerusalem!"

What a shout there was! Every one tried to get a glimpse of the city. The word went through the line, and one after another took up the cry, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem."

Then all became very quiet, for O! after all, it was such a sad home-coming. The beautiful, shining temple, which had always been the first thing to be seen as one came near Jerusalem, was gone; the walls were broken down, and only a few houses had been rebuilt.

Many of the older men and women could remember the old, beautiful Jerusalem. They could not look on this desolation unmoved, and so the boys and girls were surprised when, after the first glad cry, "Jerusalem," they saw tears on every face.

As they came nearer, they found there were so few houses in the city that they must stay in the neighboring cities, which Cyrus had given them.

The first work of these exiles was to restore the worship of Jehovah, and to do this, the temple must be rebuilt. They found many of those, who

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had not been carried away as captives, ready to help. A contribution was called for, and each gave what he could. Some gave a large amount, and some only a little.

The people gathered in Jerusalem; an altar twice the size of the old one was built; and many people from the country came to be present at the offering of the first sacrifice. It was a very happy time for everybody.

Zerubbabel now organized his forces, and set them to work clearing away the rubbish of the old temple. Masons and carpenters were hired, and lumber brought down on rafts to Joppa, and then carried across the country to Jerusalem. All this took a long time, and it was over a year before the work on the new temple was really begun.

On the second day of the second month, the priests, attired in new vestments, laid the first stone, "amidst the blasts of silver trumpets, the clash of cymbals, the music of many kinds of instruments, and the singing of psalms." In all this rejoicing the old men could not keep from crying as they thought of the old temple, but the boys and girls and the young people shouted in their happiness.

The natives around Jerusalem had become interested. The Samaritans sent messengers to Zerubbabel, offering their help in the building of the temple. The Samaritans worshiped idols, and Zerubbabel said that no idolater must help in building the temple of Jehovah.

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The Samaritans had really intended to be kind when they offered to help, and when their kindness was refused, they became angry. A league was formed against Zerubbabel. Messengers were sent to King Cyrus, telling him that he had been deceived; that the Israelites were really plotting against him; and an order came from him to stop the work on the temple.

Several years passed. The people became discouraged. They were sure there had been a mistake somewhere, and that God did not mean them to build the temple.

Ten years passed; eleven years, twelve, fourteen, and still the work on the temple stood still.

Then an old, whitehaired prophet appeared in Jerusalem, urging the people to go to work and finish the temple; but they had lost heart. Again and again he speaks to them, but he can not revive their courage.

Then God sends a young man, one born after Jerusalem was destroyed, and whose whole life had been spent in captivity. Zachariah repeats the message of the old prophet, Haggai, and tries to influence the people to work.

One night he has six visions. These he brings to the people to show them, that it does not make any difference how weak or how powerful they are, how large or how small the army of the enemy, for it is God's work they are to do, and God's message to them is "Not by might nor by

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power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." But God encouraged them still more, for He said to them: "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundations of this house; his hands also shall finish it."

Such messages brought back courage; then came a message from the new king, Darius, ratifying the decree of Cyrus, commanding the rebuilding of the temple, and the work went on steadily, enthusiasm increasing daily, and in four years—twenty years after the great caravan left Babylon—the victory was won, and the temple was completed, not by might nor by power, but by God's Spirit.

So the Israelites, after their years of wandering in the Wilderness, their possession of Canaan, and their seventy years of exile, learned once more that this was, after all, the secret of all victory, and that God had tried to teach them through all these years that victory was won, "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

MAP STUDY.

The route taken by those returning to Jerusalem lay northward, on the west side of the Euphrates, then across the desert toward Lebanon, which they approached from the north; then on to Jerusalem. This journey across the desert lay over a hard gravel plain, with no mountains, springs, trees, or flowers to break the monotony.

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It occupied about four months.

Many gathered in Babylon, and started from there; others joined them along the route, while others from distant parts of Persia followed later.

REFERENCE.—Bible, Ezra, chapters 1 to 6.
Geikie, Vol. VI, page 408.

CHAPTER XXIV.

VICTORY THROUGH UNITED EFFORT.

FOR seventy years the Jews had been captives in a strange land, but now they were going back to their own homes. Not all could go, and among those left behind was a young man named Nehemiah. Perhaps they thought he was too young to go, or it may be that, as his older brother, Hanani, was going, it was thought best for him to stay in Persia, for he was the king's cup-bearer.

Though Nehemiah lived in the beautiful palace at Shushan, he had not forgotten that he was a Jew. O, how he wanted to go back to Jerusalem! Some days he could hardly wait to hear from those who had gone back.

After a long time, one day, who should come to see him but this same brother, Hanani, who he supposed was still in Jerusalem.

Nehemiah could hardly wait to say, "How-do-you-do," he was so anxious to hear about Jerusalem. "Tell me, Hanani, all about everything. Did you have any trouble getting back? How did the city look? Was the temple wholly destroyed? Has it been rebuilt? Does it seem like old times

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there? Did you find any of the old friends? Is Jerusalem as great a city as it was?"

As Hanani answered first one question and then another, Nehemiah's face grew sad, for he saw that Jerusalem was not now the great and beautiful city he had learned to know, as well through the stories of his people, as though he himself had seen it in the days of its glory.

"One great trouble," said Hanani, "is the walls. They are broken down in many places, and the gates have been carried off. Jerusalem can never be a great city again till these are rebuilt." When Nehemiah heard this, he sat down and wept; but he was not the kind of a man to waste time crying. What was to be done about those walls? What could he do?

The first thing, of course, was to talk to God about it. He told God all about it, and asked Him to give him favor with the king so that the king would help him.

Then Nehemiah came to the hardest task of all. He had to just wait and do nothing for four months; but during all this time he kept thinking and praying.

One day, as he carried the king's wine to him, his face was very sad. The king noticed this, and said, "Why do you look so sad? You are not sick; something must be troubling you."

Then Nehemiah was afraid if he told the king it might anger him, and, even though he was

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his cup-bearer, he might throw him into prison, or kill him.

But here was his chance, and Nehemiah was no coward. He told the king all about the trouble in his own country, and that his heart was sad because the city of his fathers was desolate. Then the king said, "What is your request?"

Nehemiah prayed to God as he answered, "If thy servant has found favor in thy sight, send me to my own country that I may rebuild the walls of Jerusalem."

The king said: "Go back to Jerusalem for a time, and I will make you the governor of Jerusalem, so that you will have the right to rebuild the walls." He also gave him passports through the country, and a letter to the keeper of the forests, telling him to supply Nehemiah with timber.

So Nehemiah went back to Jerusalem, and the people were very proud and happy to have one of their own people as governor. He did not tell his plans to any one. He spent two or three days looking about him; then, waiting one night till every one was asleep, he started off on horseback to examine the walls. At one place he found the way blocked by the ruins. He was obliged to dismount and lead his horse. He followed the walls as closely as he could, making note of the breaks, and the weak places, until he had gone entirely around the city, and once more was at the gate. He had been so quiet that he reached his home

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without waking any one, or letting the people know where he had been.

Now he was ready to go to work. He called all the people together, and told them his plans, and his determination to rebuild the walls. No time was to be lost. They must get to work at once. He made them feel that it could be done, and many volunteered to go to work.

He divided the wall into sections, and assigned to each family, a section as near its own home as possible. Even the priests and the Levites helped.

The people had a mind to work, but the clearing away of the rubbish, and putting in of the repairs was a great undertaking; the weather was very hot, and many of the people were not strong enough to stand it; then, too, with so many at work it was hard to keep every one supplied with food; difficulties beset him on every hand, but Nehemiah was not discouraged.

Another trouble now came from without. The governors in the countries about Judah were displeased that Nehemiah had been made governor of Judah, and they did not want the walls of Jerusalem rebuilt. At first they just made fun of the people, because they did not think they could do it. One of them said: "You need not be afraid; if they do get the walls built, a jackal climbing up over them will knock them down." Others said, "Do they think they are going to perform a miracle and build the walls in a day?"

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They watched for many days, expecting to see them give up the work because it was too much for them. But Nehemiah and the people were not to be overcome by their ridicule, and the work went on so rapidly, that these governors soon saw that unless they stopped them, the walls would indeed be finished. They formed a league to march against Jerusalem and seize it. Spies told Nehemiah what they were going to do, and he planned to meet the attack. The work, he said, must not stop, but his plans must be changed. He divided the workmen into two companies; one company he stationed as guards at the weak places in the wall, the other company pushed the work as fast as possible, working with their swords at their sides, and their spears near by, where they could get them at a moment's notice. Watchmen stationed all around the walls kept a careful lookout. Nehemiah kept a trumpet at his side, that he might give instant warning if there were signs of an attack:

The guards were divided into two companies, one being on duty by day, and one at night.

Nehemiah seemed to be everywhere, both night and day; neither he nor his bodyguard took off their clothes while the danger lasted.

The people, led by the courage of Nehemiah, became more eager in their work. The walls grew rapidly. The enemy, seeing that their plan was discovered, disbanded their army and now tried by all kinds of strategy to kill Nehemiah. To add

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to the difficulties, there were traitors inside of the city who were trying to trap him, but Nehemiah was too good a soldier for that.

In just fifty-two days the walls were completed and the gates set up.

Nehemiah has succeeded in doing the work he came to do. Jerusalem is once more a walled city, a city to be proud of. He now appoints a guard for the city and the temple, and enforces some of the forgotten laws; and then keeps his promise to go back to Shushan to the king.

But Nehemiah's heart is in Jerusalem, and he later returns with added power from the king, to spend the rest of his life in the city of his fathers.

MAP STUDY.

Turn to Map II and complete outlines of Media and Persia. Locate Susa or Shushan. The exiles this time took the same route as in Lesson Twenty-two. Starting at Susa, they passed south of Babylon and, probably crossing the desert by what is known as the southern route, crossed the Jordan just north of the Dead Sea.

REFERENCE.—Bible, Nehemiah, chapters 1 to 6. Geikie, Vol. VI, page 488.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE CONQUEST OF SELF.

THE palace of the Persian king, Ahasuerus, was a strange battle ground. The floors were of marble and pearl; the couches of silver and gold; the curtains of blue and purple, fastened with white cords to silver curtain poles; and the drinking cups of pure gold. There was not one thing to make one think of war.

Yet in this beautiful palace a fierce battle was in progress. The king's prime minister, the wicked Haman, to satisfy his desire for revenge upon the only man in the kingdom who refused to bow before him, had obtained from the king a command that all the Jews in the country should be put to death.

This one man, Mordecai, was a Jew; but Ahasuerus never thought of that, nor remembered that to this same Mordecai he owed his life; that but for him two assassins would have gained entrance to the palace and murdered the king.

Throughout the city there was weeping and wailing among the Jews. The news of the terrible command had spread like wild-fire, and there could

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be no escape; for, once written, no decree of the king of the Medes and Persians might ever be changed.

There was but one hope. Though the king himself did not know it, his beautiful young wife, Queen Esther, was a Jewess, and of the family of Mordecai. Indeed, he was her cousin, and she had grown up in his home.

Ahasuerus little dreamed that his careless command would touch the queen, but Mordecai knew that the vengeance of Haman would not spare her. Through her, and her alone, the doom of the Jewish people might be turned aside. Mordecai, therefore, sent a messenger to her, telling her of the king's command, and that she must go to him and plead for her people.

Esther sent the messenger back, saying: "Go, remind my cousin that there is a law in this kingdom, that whoever goes into the king's presence unless he is bidden, will be put to death, unless the king extend his golden scepter; and he has not sent for me for thirty days."

The messenger repeats these words to Mordecai. "Go back to Esther," he says, "and say to her, Mordecai says, 'Somebody will save the Jews, and who knows but thou art come into the kingdom for such an hour as this.'"

As Esther hears this message, her heart almost stands still with fear. She does not answer so quickly this time. Can it be that God wants her

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to go in before the king? It would be almost like taking her own life. One never can tell what Ahasuerus will do. If he should happen to be cross or angry, she will surely lose her life. It might make him angry just to see her.

"O! No, I can't do it," she thinks; "surely God would not want me to risk my life in that way.

"But wait a moment. There are all those Jews, my own people. They will be killed unless I help them."

It is a hard battle for the young queen. Sometimes it seems as though thought for herself must surely conquer, but at last the victory is won.

"Return," says Esther to the messenger; "tell my cousin that I will go in unto the king. That if I perish, I perish. But first let all the Jews in the kingdom fast and pray for three days, and I and my maidens will fast also."

The three days of fasting past, Esther put on her royal robes, to go in unto the king. As she moved about her beautiful rooms, she knew it might be that this was the last time she should ever see all the things she loved so much. As her maids dressed her in the magnificent dress of the queen of the great Ahasuerus, they thought she had never looked so beautiful before, but they were very sad, for they knew they might never see her again. Did Esther retreat? No, indeed; the victory had been won when her answer was sent to Mordecai. She was the strong conqueror now.

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With a last loving look upon her maidens, with a firm step, and a look of noble courage in her face, she begins her dangerous journey from her own rooms to the audience chamber of the king.

As she enters the palace door, the nobles start in terror. "She has not been summoned by the king! What will he do? Must this wonderfully beautiful woman die?" The king sees her. She is so very beautiful, that as he looks at her he loves her.

All are waiting. Every eye is on the king; no one scarcely dares to breathe. What will he do? Watch! See! He surely is extending the golden scepter; and Esther, a prayer of thanksgiving to God rising from her heart, advances toward the king.

Not a word does Esther say of her real mission. She just invites the king and Haman to a banquet the next day. They accept, and the king is charmed with the entertainment. He knows she wishes to ask some favor from him, and asks her her request, promising to give her anything she wants, even to the half of his kingdom; but again Esther invites him to another banquet.

It seemed a long time to the Jews, who were so anxiously waiting to hear whether their lives were to be saved or not, but God honors such victories as Esther's.

That night the king could not sleep. He

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thought of the time when there had been a plot to kill him, and Mordecai had sent word to Esther and warned him. He sent for the court records and found that Mordecai had never received any reward.

Haman had not been able to sleep that night either, because he was so angry with Mordecai, who would not bow down to him. He had risen early and had a scaffold built on which to hang Mordecai, and now, while it was still early, he came to the king to make his request. The king met him with the words:

"What should be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor?"

Haman, thinking that he was the man, was filled with pride, as he said: "Let the royal garments which the king is used to wear be brought, and put upon the man whom the king would honor; let a horse upon which the king has ridden be brought for him to ride upon, and let it be led through the city by the noblest of the princes, who shall cry aloud, 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor.'"

The saying pleased the king, and he gave orders to Haman to go and do unto Mordecai just as he had said.

Haman dared not disobey, so instead of hanging Mordecai, he led his horse through the city, paying him the highest honors of the kingdom.

When the time came for Esther's banquet, and

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the king again asked her request, she told him the whole story.

Ahasuerus was very angry with Haman, when Esther told him that he was the man that had plotted to kill her people. Haman went to Esther to plead for his life, but this made the king still more angry. He gave orders that Haman should be put to death, and when one of his attendants told him of the gallows which Haman had built for Mordecai, the king commanded that he should be hung on that gallows.

He then told Esther and Mordecai to write a letter to all the Jews, and sign it with the king's signet. In this letter she told them of the decree that they should be killed, but also told them to gather themselves together and fight for their lives. She commanded them to kill all those who tried to kill them. So, though it seemed a long time to wait, Esther really did save her people, on that day when she was strong enough to win the victory over herself.

MAP STUDY.

Make a visit in Shushan.

REFERENCE.—Bible, the Book of Esther. Geikie, Vol. VI, page 447.

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